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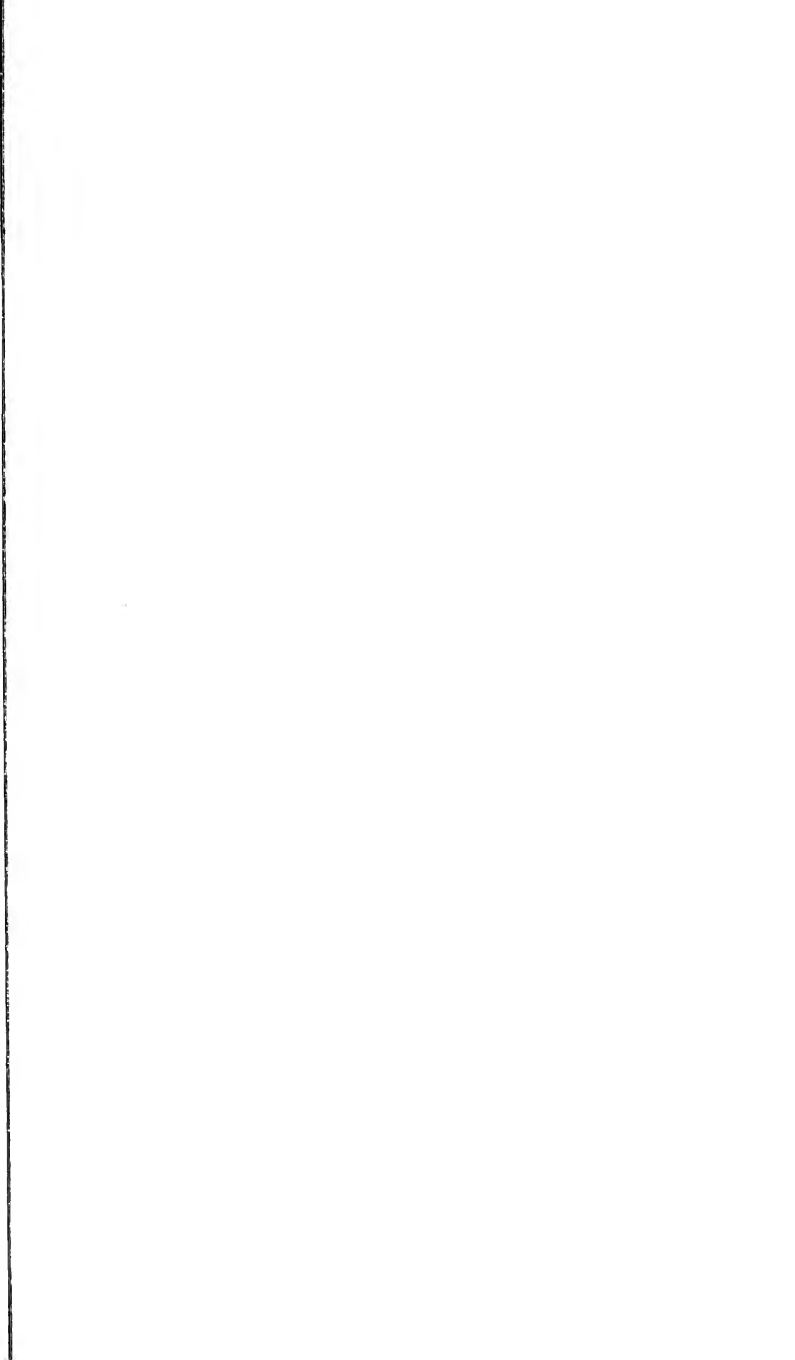
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SERMONS AND ADDRESSES.



S E R M O N S

AND

A D D R E S S E S ,

ON

V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S .

BY

REV. D. L. CARROLL, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
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PREFACE.



By the kind providence of God the author has been permitted to fulfil a conditional promise given to his friends, a year ago, in the preface to his first volume of Sermons and Addresses; namely, that were life prolonged and a sufficient degree of health granted, he would “publish another volume of equal size, and perhaps of better selection” than the first. It is a grave question with him now whether he has fulfilled the last clause of this promise, and has really made a “better selection” of subjects than in the former instance. The Sermons that constitute the principal part of this volume have been chosen rather through deference to the taste and known wishes of his friends and former parishioners, than on his own individual judgment. It would have been more accordant with his desire to employ the precious remnant of his time and of his waning strength in the way that would promise most usefulness, had he been left free to select Sermons more strictly practical, and such as would make a direct and pungent appeal to the conscience and the heart of the reader. But, to many friends a pledge was given, a year ago, that were a second volume published, it should contain certain discourses which they expressed a strong desire to have inserted. It is specially to be regretted that, amongst the Sermons thus promised, was the one on heaven, or the

“better country,” as, since that pledge was given, the author has read, from the pen of the most gifted and eloquent divine now living, the Rev. Henry Melvill, B. D., of England, a sermon on the same subject of such transcendent excellence as to render it seeming vanity, if not inexcusable presumption, for any ordinary man to publish one on this exalted theme, which the transatlantic preacher has surrounded with so unparalleled a halo of glory, that it would appear as though it had been borrowed from the blessed scene described. The one to be inserted in this volume has been promised, and must therefore appear, though no one can be more sensible than the author himself of how greatly it will suffer in the comparison with the discourse of the distinguished and popular clergyman whose name has been mentioned.

The preparation of this second volume has occupied all the time, during the past year, which the author’s enfeebled state permitted him to devote to any kind of application. In one sense, the work has been done “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling,” lest it should not be accomplished at all. And although more labour and care have been bestowed on it than on the first volume, he is sensible that it still has defects which a more careful revision, did time and health permit, would remedy. But such a revision it cannot now receive. It must be committed *as it is*, to the clemency and indulgence of the friends for whose sakes and by whose kind patronage it is published and commended to the blessing and overruling hand of that God who, notwithstanding its imperfections,

can make it instrumental of good, because it is His prerogative to choose "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

It is no affectation of modesty in the author to say, that he has no sanguine hopes respecting the reception which this second volume may meet with from his friends and the public, whilst he has many forebodings that it may disappoint their expectations, and be regarded as inferior to the first. Were he sensitive as to fame, or aiming to establish a reputation as a writer, he would not publish this volume with its present selection, both of Sermons and Addresses. That author must be very ignorant of the laws which govern the reading public, who does not know that, however little the expectation, and however low the standard created by his first production, a *second*, which may have equal, but *only* equal merit, will not be esteemed so, because there is a silent assumption in every mind that it *ought* to be *better*, in order to justify its publication; and hence, if it be only equal, the disappointment produces a reaction which renders it the less popular of the two. But the knowledge of this fact has not deterred the author from issuing the present volume. Other and paramount considerations have influenced him in this matter. The possibility that the volume may contain and give some permanency even to *one* of those eternal and immutable truths of God which his Spirit uses as the means of edifying the Christian, or of awakening and converting the sinner, has been a sufficient reason, in his view, for its publication, notwithstanding the disadvantages it may encounter in compari-

son with similar volumes of other authors, or with the one that preceded it from his own pen.

The hours employed in its preparation, though many of them have been hours of physical suffering and depression, yet have they been mingled with a melancholy pleasure, as not only diverting the author's mind from dwelling on the fatal malady under which he is labouring, but as furnishing some scope to that love of mental effort and that hope of resultant usefulness which have been two elements of his happiness for the last twenty-five years. Whilst engaged in the work, it has seemed to give a pleasing vividness to the associations of his pastoral life when busied, from week to week, in preparing these and other topics of discourse for the spiritual welfare of a beloved and affectionate people. And now that he has finished it, a most tender and undefinable sadness steals over his spirit, as though the *last link* were parted that bound him to all those to whom he once ministered, in the earlier and palmer days of life. Gratefully recording the goodness of God, and thankfully acknowledging the kind sympathies and liberal patronage of friends, that have cheered and enabled him to accomplish the work, he would bow without a murmur to that dispensation of the all-wise and ever-blessed God, which has already set him aside from the active duties of the holy office, cut off his hopes, and is steadily bringing him "to the house appointed for all living." "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

NEWARK, DEL., Aug. 4, 1817.

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SERMONS.

I.

“Because I knew thee that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew and thy brow brass.”—ISAIAH XLVIII. 4.

THIS is the language of God to his ancient people. On first view it is rather surprising that, to a people in covenant relation with himself, such a style of address should be adopted by the High and Holy One. The preceding verses, however, show that it was the *unconverted* portion of Israel whose character is thus described—(vide v. 1—3.) The metaphors here employed are, perhaps, the strongest and most striking in the compass of the scriptures. The phrase “Thy neck is an iron sinew” seems to refer to the rugged, sullen, unyielding ox, who, with indomitable obstinacy, refuses to submit his neck to the yoke. The force of this allusion is greatly enhanced by the consideration that, whatever may be the strength of the resistance offered by the ox, his neck is composed of a number of different tissues and tendons of flesh, some of which may be compelled to yield under a given force, and thus lead to the subjection of the whole; whilst the sinner’s neck is represented as composed of a homogeneous, hard mass—*one consolidated sinew of iron*. “Thy brow brass” seems to

refer to the metallic cap or helmet of the soldier, which covered his brow and rendered it invulnerable by the sword of the enemy. These are the metaphors by which God would shadow forth the resistance which unrenewed men offer to the gospel. Now, if there be power in language or meaning in metaphor, when used by the Almighty, then our text was designed to teach us that the strength of the sinner's resistance to the gospel is appallingly great! "Thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass." Could you select a phrase from human language to convey the idea of an obstinacy and resistance more determined and tremendous than this? My dear impenitent hearer, this is the language which God himself employs to startle you to-day at the thought of the awful strength of *your* resistance to the calls and offers of the gospel!

This is the subject to which I would now crave your close and serious attention. I do not intend to amuse you, my hearers, by treating this subject in an abstract and metaphorical manner. This day and this place are too sacred, and life is too short, and too serious in its issues on eternity, to lose this opportunity of "commending the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Forget not then, my impenitent hearer, in the progress of this discourse, that it is *YOUR* obstinacy—the strength of *YOUR* resistance to the calls and offers of mercy—that is the subject under consideration. And to give you some idea of the strength of this your resistance, consider,

I. That it is *a native and deep-rooted principle of your depravity, and not an incidental or tem-*

porary habit or mode of feeling. Men can be placed in circumstances in which they will feel very strongly, when that feeling is merely the result of the condition in which, for the time being, they are held. Indeed, the human mind is subject to a number of incidental impulses from without, which, for a season, may sway it powerfully. The struggles and frenzy of political and ecclesiastical partisans are ample proof of this. But feelings which are the result of *mere* circumstances, or of external and casual impulses, are necessarily of short duration. They disappear, of course, with the circumstances which gave them birth. They have no root in the mind itself, and cannot therefore remain and incorporate themselves with the very existence of the mind, and “grow with its growth and strengthen with its strength,” and thus have all the energy of *permanent* principles of our nature. Now, the sinner’s resistance to Christ and the gospel is *not* a temporary feeling of this kind. It is not the result of mere circumstances or casual associations, nor the effect of an external and temporary impulse. His resistance to the Saviour is an original and deep-rooted principle of his depraved nature. It is a part of his own sinful self—a primary element of his perverted moral being. “For the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God; *neither, indeed, can be.*” This is the character of the sinner’s resistance! Its roots have gone down to the very bottom of his soul, and draw nourishment from every power of his nature. Carried about with him “in every track and lane of life,” and incessantly fed from a thousand hidden sources, this re-

sistance of the sinner has every facility to increase its fearful might that pertains to any native principle of the heart. It grows, then, and *will* grow, till the strength of the oaks of Bashan will be no more compared with it than that of the reed shaken by the wind.

II. In estimating the force of the soul's resistance to Christ and the gospel, consider, *in the second place, the strength which it has acquired by exercise or repeated action.* In reference to the human body, it is a clear and indisputable truth of physiology, that the great law of development and growth in all the corporeal powers is exercise, or the *reiterated* action of those powers on appropriate objects. Were a child prevented wholly from using its arms, those members would not only cease to grow, but would become partly withered. On the contrary, if the pursuits of early life lead to the vigorous exercise of these limbs, as in the case of some of the mechanical branches, they will exhibit a fulness of development and a muscular strength far greater than are found in persons who have been confined to more inactive employments. Now, the same great law operates in the development and growth of our intellectual faculties, and in the formation and force of our moral habits. *Constant exercise* will give to every constitutional susceptibility an incalculable strength. What made the difference in the intellectual strength of Lord Bacon when a youth, and no way distinguished from others of his own age around him, and, when more advanced in life, his giant mind grasped in its potent sweep the whole range of human science, and pointed out the method

by which every branch of it might be carried towards perfection? Simply the reiterated action, the constant *exercise*, to which he had patiently disciplined his mind. How shall we account for the amazing difference between Sir Isaac Newton's mental power when playing with the toys of boyhood, and when afterwards he was found capable of discovering the great law of gravitation—of measuring the distance of the stars—and of almost invading the prerogative of the Almighty, by "telling all their numbers?" Simply by the *incessant exercise* of his mental faculties. For, after he had made all his splendid attainments, he was asked, on one occasion, whether he was conscious of possessing any mental power which really distinguished him, as an individual, from other men. He replied that he was not, except it might be the power of a patient and prolonged *exercise* of his intellectual faculties. Again. What constituted the difference between the strength of Napoleon's ambition when a mere subaltern in the army, and when afterwards, from the summit of empire, he seemed to have before his eye Satan's grand panorama of the kingdoms of this world and all their glory, and aimed at nothing short of these as the objects of his conquests? Obviously the *exercise* which he had given to that baleful passion. What a gigantic might can the principles of our nature acquire merely by their reiterated action!

Now, the sinner's resistance to Christ and the gospel has, in respect to exercise, a decided advantage over most or all other active principles of our nature. This resistance is called into play much *earlier* than were the intellectual powers of Bacon or

Newton, or the unhallowed ambition of Bonaparte. Resistance to Jesus Christ, the Saviour, is the first moral act of the soul. The proof of this lies within the precincts of the nursery. When maternal love and piety, watching the first buddings of moral susceptibility in the infant, weep over it, tell it the all-subduing story of the cross, pray with it, and then beseech it to give its young heart to Christ, what is the result? Does the child yield and obey? No! it *resists* that call, and *refuses* to submit to the Saviour. Beginning, then, thus *early*, think, my hearers, how *numerous* are the occasions that call this resistance into action. It has never slumbered during one day since it was first awoke in infancy. For the mercies of any single day, if not resisted, would melt and subdue the heart; and the very fact that the sinner is still obstinate and impenitent, is proof that those mercies have been *daily* resisted. So have been all the example and influence of godly parents and pious friends—all the sermons and exhortations—all the truths read in the word of God—all the warnings of Providence—all the alternations of goodness and severity, which have checkered the history of God's dealings with the sinner through the whole of past life. Now, what a vigorous and incessant play must the sinner's resistance have had to have effected all this for the space of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years! No power of his nature has been so busily employed. It has been exercised till it has acquired a fulness of development and a fearful force which God describes by the metaphor of our text—"Thy neck is an *iron sinew*, and thy *brow brass*." "The hidings of its power are terrible!"

Musing on its awful might, we experience an emotion of the dark and horrible sublime not unlike that felt when we contemplate the mysterious, supernatural energies of "the Prince of the power of the air" himself.

III. To enhance our ideas of its strength, consider, in the *third place, the means of augmenting and fortifying his resistance to Christ* by which the sinner is surrounded. It must have occurred to every reflecting mind, that the whole subverted order of things brought in upon our world by the apostacy of Adam tends directly, in all its details, to strengthen this resistance. When the sinner is young, and the principle of *imitation* acts most vigorously, what a means of increasing this resistance does he have in the *ungodly example* of his superiors in age. In society there are never wanting some, either parents or others, who, by their example, tread in upon the young mind the lesson of neglect of God, and resistance to Christ and the gospel. They tutor it to practise its neck to refuse the yoke, and teach it how to make it become an iron sinew. Again: as the sinner arrives at that period of life when the *desire for society* is strongest, what a means to increase and fortify his resistance does ungodly youthful companionship afford. Ah! this resistance in the soul of the young man finds abundant congeniality and confirmation from the great majority of youth around him. It does not render him singular, and cause him to be avoided. Nay, it is one of the points of strongest attraction to his wicked companions.

There is also an ingenious array of *youthful pleasures* presented to allure the young mind, and greatly

increase its reluctance to yield to the claims of Christ. Indeed, his resistance has the advantage of connecting its power with the entire force of that current of gayety and youthful mirth, which is becoming more and more strong and resistless as society advances. And in addition to this, he has the whole array of youthful passions within him, in the very spring-time and hey-day of their violent and tumultuous excitability, ready on all occasions to add their united power to the strength of his resistance to the gospel. When the sinner arrives at manhood and middle age, then what means of increasing and fortifying his obstinate refusal of the offers of mercy are furnished him by the crowded cares of this period—by the cravings of avarice and the calculations of an absorbing selfishness—by the hurry, and bustle, and competitions of the road to wealth—by the temptations to overreaching and dishonesty, in the great haste to be rich. What a powerful re-enforcement are all these to the strength of the sinner's resistance to the gospel!

Even in old age, when there are no longer any appliances for increasing the bodily or intellectual strength, the sinner finds ample means to augment and fortify his opposition to the Saviour. For then he has the power of *early associations* and *long cherished habits* of resistance. He has, also, either the moroseness of disappointment or the intoxication of success in the pursuits of a long life, or his physical energies are so far wasted that he has the timidity, the irresolution, the despondency and decrepitude of age, all concurring to add a new power of resistance to God and his gospel. Whilst, in his physical con-

stitution, the aged sinner is but the mere wreck of what he once was, yet out of this weakness his resistance waxes strong, and flourishes from the very decay going on around its roots!

Now, contemplate this array of means for increasing and fortifying the sinner's opposition—an array stretching along the whole line of his existence, and pressing in from both sides of his guilty pathway, to aid him in his every act of rejecting offered mercy—and say, my hearers, what must be the strength of his resistance, when aided and upheld by so mighty a combination of forces! Without exaggeration, we may apply to it the inspired description of a demoniac of old—“And no man could bind him; no, not *with chains*: neither could any man tame him!” The sinner's resistance has a strength that will break away from every thing but the “everlasting chains” of God's omnipotence!

IV. The great strength of the sinner's resistance to Christ and the gospel may be judged of *by the powerful motives* which it successfully withstands. The best way to test the real strength of any principle is to see what given force it can overcome. But how shall we compute the power of those innumerable motives which God presents to disarm the sinner of his rebellion, and which the sinner successfully resists? Who can calculate the moral force of the appeal which *God's goodness* makes to every human heart? A goodness that stands confessed in the organization of every atom that composes the material creation. Earth, air, ocean; the skies, with their commingling light and glory, eloquent of the infinite goodness of Jehovah! Day unto day utter-

ing speech, and night unto night showing knowledge of Him; their voice going out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world, to melt the hearts of sinners. But their resistance is strong enough to withstand this motive. God appeals, also, to the sinner in that goodness which is directed towards him as an individual, and is employed specially in prolonging his life and crowning his earthly allotment with innumerable blessings. That goodness which is daily protecting him from unnumbered dangers, known and unknown—which is pouring oil and wine into the inevitable wounds of his present condition—which is employing a watchful and incessant agency on the springs of life itself, and holding in harmonious action all the parts of the vital machinery; a goodness which is commissioning a thousand messengers on errands of kindness to the sinner every moment. Yet that sinner has a resistance strong enough to spurn this munificent hand that has been ever full of bounties for him individually, and to cast indignity in the very face of that infinite benevolence which has been shining and smiling on him, notwithstanding his reckless ingratitude. How strong must that resistance be! But to the sinner God makes another and more tender appeal. He invites that sinner to come up to Calvary, and commune with Him respecting the things that happened there, and to contemplate the sublime and melancholy glories of the cross. There, in the eloquence of eternal love, God speaks out his heart to the sinner. "This is my beloved Son." See him, with a countenance still deeply shaded with that sorrowfulness of soul which he had in Gethsemane; see the

great sweat of his agony not yet dried from his brow; behold the marks of his buffeting and scourging, till you might tell all his bones; see the crown of thorns beaten into his sacred temples by blows of mob-violence; see those hands that stretched out and garnished the heavens, and those feet, that shone on Tabor's top and trod celestial worlds, now nailed to the ignominious cross: hear, oh hear him exclaim, in the eloquence of dying love and sorrow, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me!" Sinner, *this* is my beloved Son! I freely gave him up to all this for you. This is the splendid offering which my eternal mercy made for your redemption! My only begotten, well beloved Son, endured all this, and hidden woes of the soul that mortals cannot know—he prayed and wept, and bled and died, and rose and reigns on high, that *you* might be saved—that *you* might have pardon, and peace, and hope, and joy here in this present life, and exultations, and triumph, and transports of bliss unutterable in the life to come! "This is my beloved Son!" Sinner, will you hear *him*? But lo! the sinner has a strength of resistance which enables him to turn coldly away from Calvary, his countenance unmoved as marble, his heart hard as adamant!

God has also, in his retributive visitations in the present world, addressed powerful motives to *the fears* of the sinner. He has made "his pavilion round about him dark waters and thiek clouds of the sky." He has "revealed his wrath from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men." More than once has he darkened our world with the frown of his indignation against sin! In

the woes of the great overthrow in Eden—in the rush and the roar of those blending streams of heaven and earth that destroyed the old world—in the lightnings and earthquake that subverted the cities of Sodom's plain—in the biography of sinning and suffering Israel—in the pestilence, and famine, and sword—in all the national and individual disaster and catastrophe that have filled the entire history of the world, God has appealed to the sinner's fears, and warned him to flee from the wrath to come! And yet his resistance is strong enough to brave these terrors and withstand this appeal. In the alarms of his providence, also, God may have addressed the sinner personally. In the repeated visitations of death he may have wrested from that sinner one and another, and another of his relatives and friends, till his bereaved and bleeding heart knows not where to turn for respite from its multiplied sorrows. Yea, the hand of God may have been laid on the sinner himself, and have held him suspended as by a hair over the grave and eternity. Thus, in every badge of mourning he has worn—from every opening tomb over which he has bent—in every pain of body which he has endured—in all the hidden anguish of mind that has ever been his—in all the sobs, and sighs, and tears, and groans, and final farewells of the death-scenes he has witnessed, the eternal God has warned him of the consequences of sin, and presented motives to his fears; but the sinner's resistance has been sufficiently strong to defy them all!

Not only has God brought to bear upon the sinner powerful motives from the past and the present,

but also from the *future*. Jehovah has drawn aside that mysterious curtain which conceals the world to come. He has opened heaven to the sinner's hope. A heaven of deep and unending repose; an eternal heaven of sinless purity—of deathless joys—of unspeakable triumphs of the intellect and the heart in all knowledge, holiness, and bliss for ever! God offers it as the immortal inheritance of the sinner's soul. He calls upon him to catch the inspiration of its shouts of victory; to feel the divine charm of its harps and its song, and the diviner transports of its grand hallelujah chorus to God and the Lamb. And behold, so strong is the sinner's resistance that he can close his eyes on heaven's visions of glory, and turn the deafness of the adder's ears to all the wooing strains of its celestial voices!

To ply his fears, God has also revealed a future hell to the sinner. A hell of deep and agitating turmoil and storms; an endless hell of perfected depravity—of unspeakable bursts of lawless passions—of uncaged and untameable malignity—of undying woes—of unpitied wailing—of moans of eternal agony, that will rend its gloomy atmosphere and reverberate through its deep caverns of despair while immortality rolls on! God assures the sinner that, continuing impenitent, this shall be the everlasting portion of his cup. He calls upon the sinner to tremble as he sees the smoke of its torments ascending and darkening his horizon, and hears the loud wail of the lost, warning him of his approaching doom! And yet the sinner has a power of resistance that enables him to laugh at these terrors of the Almighty! "Fools make a mock at

sin.” And happy will it be for some of you, my youthful hearers, if you have not already learned to sport with the thought of perdition, and to treat as a jest the tremendous realities of an eternal hell! Oh, what manner of resistance is this! Contemplate for a moment, by recapitulation, the motives which it withstands: motives that commence with time, and combine the urgency of all the judgments and all the mercies that constitute the sum of God’s administration over the world; motives that reach into eternity, and compass all the joys of the redeemed and all the woes of the damned! Look at the sinner, begirded with all the motives which time and eternity, heaven, earth, and hell can bind round him—and, superadded to all these, the power of conscience and the strivings of the Holy Ghost—and behold him, in the strength of his resistance to Christ, break them all asunder, as did Samson the green withes from his arms, and arise and shake them from him as the lion does the dew-drops from his mane in the morning!

What think you now, my dear hearers, of the strength of this resistance, as measured by the number and power of the motives which it successfully withstands. It is pre-eminently the most awful energy that pertains to human nature. It is the very aggregation of all the tremendous forces of man’s depraved being!

V. We may learn something more of the strength of this resistance by contemplating *the* NATURE OF THE AGENT *that exercises it.*

It is not a blind, but all-conquering might, such as paganism and infidelity attribute to the decrees

of an immutable fate. It is the purposed, deliberate resistance of *intelligent*, IMMORTAL MIND. But, with what forces in nature shall we compare mind? When witnessing the action of the great agencies of *matter*, we are often filled with amazement at *their* energies. The might of the billows of ocean—the resistless sweep of the tornado—the destructive violence of fire—the terrific power of steam, and the almost omnipotence of the volcano and the lightning, though they be mere blind, *material* agents, can never be contemplated without a feeling of oppressive sublimity, and a deep impression of the “thunder of God’s power” as the Creator. But we approach the contemplation of man’s intelligent, immortal spirit, and find that *its* power, though of another kind, *rises above* the agencies of matter. It spurns all the brute force which they wield, and by its own superior energies of *thought* and *will*, discovers the laws which regulate these mighty agencies, and makes many of them subservient to its own convenience and comfort.

It is the power of mind that has enabled man to yoke the winds to his gallant sail; to lay his fearless hand on the curling mane of ocean, and ride in safety and triumph over its topmost wave! It is this which has enabled him to chain the hissing steam to the car, and transport himself over land with the speed of a bird of the air. It was this which enabled a Franklin to pluck the plume of his fame from the lightning’s wing unharmed by its deadly bolt, and a Morse to lay his message on that wing, for an almost instantaneous transmission round the globe!

And then let us look back over the history of the world, at the trophies of art and science which mind has reared. What stupendous monuments of its power stand along the track of past ages. Look at the sway which certain minds have held over earth's millions, century after century. What a tremendous impression of their existence and character have they stamped in on their own generation, and the generations following. Look over the earth at present, on all the recent discoveries in the arts and sciences—on the modifications and revolutions of human governments—on the march and daily triumphs of civilization—on the great enterprises of benevolence, and the propagation of Christianity. What mighty power is this that is spreading out its impulses over this busy creation, and moving and heaving its masses of bustling activity? It is the power of intelligent, immortal mind. A power that can soar above this nether world, and, making the heavens its observatory, discover new worlds in the far off realms of space, and travel in thought through the circuit of the universe. What amazing energies does mind possess! And yet the present life is but the morning hour of its existence, and all these monuments of its power which fill the earth, but the mere toys which it has made on the play-ground of its infancy! For mind has the germ of powers that are yet to be evolved in its immortal manhood, compared with which its present capacities are perfectly infantile. Powers that are to be waked and energised, and taxed with intense action, either in the employments of heaven or the struggles of hell, long ages after all the mightiest agencies of matter shall have worn themselves out and ceased to be!

Now, my hearers, *this*, THIS is *the nature* of the agent that resists Christ and the gospel. Oh, what must the strength of that resistance be! "Thou, God, only knowest!" We know that such a resistance the Son of God never met with from the laws and agencies of matter. When the winds and the waves combined their tumultuating violence to destroy the frail bark that bore his disciples on the sea of Galilee, he had but to say, "Peace, be still," and immediately there was a great calm. When disease seized its subject, and commenced its subtle, insidious task of disorganizing the wonderful framework of the body, he had but to speak the word, and the patient was restored to perfect health. When death itself had severed the silver cord, and the grave had set up its dark dominion over an individual, he had but to proclaim, "Lazarus, come forth," and the man was before him, full of life. But when, in the voice of love and mercy, he calls to the immortal mind in its fortified resistance, he calls in vain. That mind returns no answer! When he asks the wounded, bleeding sinner, "Wilt thou be made whole?" that sinner maintains the sullen silence of spiritual death. When he says to the labouring and heavy laden, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," the resistance of the sinner holds him firm and motionless as a brazen colossus! Why is this? It is because it is the resistance of intelligent, *voluntary* MIND. It is the awful perversion of the sinner's power as a free moral agent; whose nature is such that it is not consistent for God himself to exercise any species of physical force upon it. It is the resistance of a nature made but a

little lower than the angels; of a mind created in the image of its God, and decreed to immortality! A resistance that has all the strength of those marshalled forces of the undying soul which will wage war upon God, and grapple with damnation through eternal ages!

We see from this subject, in the first place, *the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit's influences for the conversion of souls.*

Contemplate the strength of the sinner's resistance to Christ and the gospel as now presented, and judge for yourselves, my hearers, whether there be any mere means or instrumentality apart from a *divine* influence that will ever overcome that resistance. The strong man armed is in his palace, keeping his goods in peace, and he smiles in Satanic scorn at the puny force of all the mere means that can be brought to dispossess him and spoil his house. *He* knows the strength of his resistance. He knows that it has coped, successfully, with the entire array of motives that creation, providence, and grace, the past, present, and future can present. And, especially, after being strong enough to carry him headlong in his rebellion and impenitence over the summit of Calvary, trampling under foot the Son of God in his suffering and glory—blinding his eyes, and deafening his ears, to the sights and sounds there revealed, and steeling his heart against the pleadings of all the love, and all the wo, of the crucifixion, what hope is there for the soul's salvation, even in the might of an angel's arm! How idle to talk of moral suasion, and the adaptation and power of mere truth, to conquer this resistance. "*Leviathan is*

not so tamed." The brow of brass droops not; the iron sinew bends not beneath any force less than the moral omnipotence of the Holy Ghost! Every other influence in the universe will fail to disarm him of his enmity, and to prostrate the sinner's resistance to Christ and the gospel. My dear, impenitent hearer, the sooner you are convinced of this, the better. Your voluntary resistance to the Saviour has acquired such a strength as to render the work of your redemption no trivial affair. You are completely dependent on the sovereign mercy of an offended God, and on the direct and efficient influences of the aggrieved, insulted, Spirit of grace, for your salvation. You have destroyed yourself absolutely. If there be any help for you, it is in *God ONLY*. It is in that "exceeding great power by which He raised up Christ from the dead!" O! in what a terrible condition are you placed by the strength of your resistance to the Lord that bought you!! Why is it that you do not so realize this, your forlorn state, as to throw yourself immediately on the arm of Almighty God for deliverance! My dear Christian friends, *you* ought to be deeply convinced, also, that the Holy Spirit's influences are the only ground of hope that sinners will be saved. You know that it is no exaggerated picture of the strength of their resistance, which I have now presented. And if sinners will still sleep on under this fearful representation, do you take the alarm for them. They will certainly be lost, and *you know it*, unless the Holy Spirit be poured out upon them from on high. O, then, fly to your closets, to your family altars, and to the social prayer meeting, and

“being in an agony,” in view of their condition, “pray the more earnestly,” that God would send those all-conquering influences of the Holy Spirit, without which, they will resist the Lord Jesus till the last, and sink in a hopeless perdition!

FINALLY. This subject shows us *the folly and madness of putting off the work of salvation to some future period.*

What is it, my ungodly hearer, that has kept you thus long without an interest in Christ, and peace with God? Simply *the strength of your resistance* to Christ and his gospel. Nothing else, whatever, has been in your way. This is the obstacle to your being reconciled to God *now*. And, we have seen, that this your resistance is receiving fresh accessions of strength by exercise, and by the various means of fortifying it, every hour that you live. It has been, and is now, strong enough to break away from the influence of all the motives past, present, and future, that God has brought to bear upon you! And yet you are putting off the work of repentance, submission, and faith, to some future period, with the hope that it will be *easier* to perform them then, when that resistance which is sufficiently strong to prevent you from doing the work now, will then have an *indefinitely augmented* power!! O! what consummate folly! what egregious madness!! What would you think of an individual who at present was bound with a chain which he was required to break, but which he felt to be already so strong as to incline him to procrastinate the effort; and yet, every day that he delayed, another chain of equal or greater strength, would be wound about him. Sup-

pose you saw him, as chain after chain was added by his delay, still looking onward to a more distant period in the future, when he hoped it would be easier to break their combined power, and make his escape. You would pronounce him a madman.— A worse madness than this is in the heart of the sinner, who, from ten thousand sources, every day is feeding the strength of his resistance to Christ, and yet putting off the hour of his submission, with the hope that hereafter his reluctance to yield to God will be less! Deluded mortal! He is under the charm of the Old Serpent, who has gotten him within his elastic folds; and while the sinner delays repentance, Satan lays around his ruined soul, another and another snaky coil, till his whole length will at last be expended, and then he will tighten those coils, till bound hand and foot, the sinner will find himself the unresisting victim of eternal death!!— Yes, ye delaying hearers, in the light of this subject, you can see the guilty hopelessness of procrastination. It is highly probable you will perish for ever! Millions under the gospel, who have trodden before you in this path of criminal procrastination, have, ere they were aware, found their bands made strong upon them, and been delivered over to the judge, and the judge has cast them into the prison of everlasting despair. Now you are pursuing precisely the same course, and what shall hinder you from sharing the same awful destiny! How heart-rending the thought that the impenitent *youth*, as well as older transgressors here to-day, are hurrying on in this course, and hastening to this tremendous doom! O, God of mercy! arrest them—

O, Thou bleeding Lamb of God, interpose to save them—Holy Spirit come, O, come, and conquer their resistance before it bring upon them the bitter pangs of the second death.

SERMON II.

“Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the *Lord* hath spoken good concerning Israel.”—NUMBERS x. 29.

SINCERE piety is essentially *benevolent*. Its entire spirit is diametrically opposed to the contracted, calculating, and *selfish* temper of the world. It aims at the widest possible diffusion of its high privileges and spiritual blessings. Like its divine Author, the religion of the gospel delights in the communication of happiness. And those whose piety consists wholly in a formal round of duties performed under the lash of a *slavish* fear and the stimulus of a *selfish* hope, ought to suspect their spiritual state, and to know that *theirs* is *not* the pure and undefiled religion of the Bible. It is not *the kind* of piety which Moses exhibits in our text. In the midst of the journeyings of the camp, and overwhelmed as he was with the fatigues, the cares, the perplexities and responsibilities of his office as the leader of Israel, his pious solicitude for Hobab, his brother-in-law, breaks out in the tender and touching invitation—“Come thou with us, and we will do thee good.” That this is not a mere invitation to Hobab to become a *civil* member of the Hebrew commonwealth, and to participate only in its temporal blessings, is obvious from the words that immediately follow—“for *the Lord* hath spoken good con-

cerning Israel.” It was the spiritual blessings secured in the covenant with Abraham—the instruction of inspired prophets—the promises of a Messiah, protection from the idolatrous corruptions of the world—divine guidance in the moral pilgrimage to eternity, shadowed forth by the pillar of cloud and of fire that went before them in the wilderness, and divine influence to fit for that *heavenly* Canaan of which the earthly was a type,—*these* constituted *the good* which the Lord had spoken concerning Israel, and in which Moses devoutly desired that his brother-in-law might participate. Were we to judge by the conduct of the great majority of mankind, we would suppose that it was disadvantageous, if not *disastrous*, to be connected with the church of God. Worldly men avoid her communion, as though it would do them *evil*, and not good, to have their allotment within her sacred pale. But our text falsifies this practical sentiment of the ungodly, and indicates directly that there are great advantages in a *sincere cordial* connexion with the people of God. “Come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.” This is the language we would address to our friends and relatives who are out of Christ—to all who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. True, we are in the wilderness, but the bright cloud of Jehovah’s presence is with us, and we are journeying to the celestial Canaan, the Mount Zion above, under a divine, an almighty convoy. “Come with us, and we will do thee good.” Now, if you will cordially accept this invitation, and voluntarily and sincerely connect yourselves with God’s *spiritual* Israel, then I will

endeavour in the following particulars, to show you *the advantages of such a connexion.*

1. You will have the advantage of being connected with a community *who have fixed principles, and may be trusted.* No man is safe in associating with, and becoming a member of a community whose principles are *fluctuating or doubtful.*

And no combination of unregenerate men ever were, or ever will be, governed by stable and unalterable principles. The commercial, and especially the political history, of the last fifteen years, amply attest the truth of this declaration. Most worldly men have so pliant a virtue, that principles with them will yield to party and self-interest, and as these latter are often shifting, so the former must undergo a corresponding change. A change in political majorities, a preponderance on this side or that, of the great balance of popular sentiment, a change in the currents of commerce or manufactures, the shifting breath of public opinion, are producing constant fluctuations in the principles which sway worldly men. Of what advantage are the friendship, the patronage, and proffered favours of a community with such fickle and mutable principles? Who would trust such a community, or feel himself safe for an hour, unless, indeed, he had a kind of prophetic prescience, by which he could foresee the evil of the coming change, and thus avoid it—and this is the reason why wicked men exercise so little real confidence in each other. But the *true spiritual* Israel, are a community with *fixed principles.* In the church of God, notwithstanding its hypocrites and formalists, we can find the sway of the higher and nobler principles of human

nature, stable and permanent. *Their* principles are not derived from the manners and customs of the world, are not connected merely with selfish interests, and sensual earthly policy, and are therefore not subject to the *fitful shiftings* of such interests and policy. The principles of the household of faith, the great spiritual commonwealth of Israel, are derived from heaven. The laws of moral honesty, the laws of truth, the laws of strict distributive justice, the laws of benevolence, and the statutes regulating social intercourse, and prescribing social duties, which are found in *the Bible*; *these* constitute the great code, the common law of the spiritual community:—a code with an authority divine, with a sanction solemn and weighty, as the awards of eternity. These laws are transcribed by the finger of God, not on the cold tables of stone in the unrenewed understanding, but on the fleshly tables of the *re-generated hearts* of his people. These form the high and commanding principles which govern “the Israel of God;” principles founded on the eternal and immutable basis of *right*, reaching from the throne of God, and anchored immoveably in the regenerated moral nature of man. They are by necessity, then, *fixed*, STABLE principles. Let the world calumniate sincere Christians as it may, they are permanently governed by these principles. Though they “swear to their own hurt, they *change not*.” There is a steadiness, a general uniformity in their conduct and course, on which you can safely calculate. What an advantage to be connected with a community who have clear, well defined, fixed, unchangeable principles, and the constant presence and

power of a renewed, enlightened, quickened *conscience*, to put them in *practice*! Come with us, then, ye who are tossed, bewildered, and betrayed by the perpetual fluctuation of worldly principles, and we will do you good; we will give you the right hand of fellowship, and welcome you to a community in whom you may confide—a community where you may regard yourselves *safe*—where your feelings, your reputation, your interests, your happiness, will be guarded and guaranteed to you, by the operation of principles as steady and changeless on the whole, as the great laws of nature.

II. A *second* advantage of such a connexion is, that you will *be in contact with the minds of a community more intelligent, better informed in the knowledge of divine things, than any other portion of society*. I know there are associations of men that are more scientific, that have more of this world's philosophy, and a wider range of human knowledge, than any promiscuous Christian community or individual church. And yet, perhaps, the whole commonwealth of Israel for the last three centuries, would, in point of *human* learning, bear a flattering comparison with any community of equal numbers out of her pale. But human knowledge, however valuable, is not all that the wants and capacities of the soul demand. It has no direct influence in the formation of moral character, and no necessary connexion with the great issues of a future and eternal state. To know the "living and true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent," *that* involves the mighty interests of eternal life. *This* knowledge belongs *only* to God's *spiritual* community, and every mind in that community has an

individual, experimental participation in this knowledge. It has not been, and cannot be, acquired by the unaided powers of the natural man. The Holy Ghost in his divine illuminations hath revealed it to each regenerated soul, and it is there only that it shines as a light in a dark place. In the most unlettered, ignorant, obscure individual in that community, this celestial spark is kindled and glowing. In its pure shinings he sees truths, and acquires a knowledge of divine things denied to the most strenuous efforts of the wise of this world, who by all their wisdom knew not God in the days of Paul, and know him not yet! The spiritual Israel are still, as of old, the *only depositories* of the true knowledge of God and divine things. Why should it not be so? They have still the lively oracles of God, an intelligent ministry—the administration of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the mind and apply truth and the *verification* of that blessed promise and prediction—“*they shall all be taught of God.*” Now, what an advantage to be connected with such a community, to be in constant contact with minds thus stored with *spiritual* knowledge. For each one, by the help of God, and in the use of means too, has to acquire this knowledge, a knowledge indispensable to his salvation, for himself. It cannot be imparted to him by charm or enchantment, nor can it be inherited from intelligent, pious parents. In order to judge of, and to appreciate the advantage in gaining this knowledge, to be derived from constant contact with mature, well-informed Christian minds, just advert, for a moment, to the slow progress of the convert from heathenism, who joins a church consisting wholly of native converts. Suppose, if you please,

an individual in this land, of no better capacities, and of no more religious knowledge than the convert in the heathen land, to join a Christian church here at the same time that that convert joins a *native* Christian church there. How slow will be his progress in the knowledge of divine things compared with the one here! Why? Has not the heathen convert the same God, the same converting and sanctifying grace, the same Bible, an intelligent pastor and preacher? Yes, but God works by means, and one of the great means of *rapid* advancement in spiritual knowledge is wanting there, that is, that constant intercourse, that social contact with older, riper, more richly furnished Christian minds, which here exerts an incessant silent influence on the young convert's growth in knowledge, not unlike the unobserved but all-powerful influence of the sunshine and dews of heaven on vegetation. Come with us, then, ye who have never hitherto known the communion of saints in knowledge, nor the mutual radiations of truth between minds, nor have felt the play of the highest and noblest sympathies of your intellectual nature. Come with us, and we will do you good, we will bring you into sweet fellowship with minds who will make your social affections the medium through which in every walk of life they will impart liberally to you the results of their own ripened Christian experience, the rich stores of their knowledge of divine things.

III. You will have the advantage of *the restraints of the Christian sentiment, and the influence of the Christian example of this community in forming your own religious character.*

Next in importance to the conversion of the soul, is the religious character which it shall form and sustain through life. *This* will determine the measure of its confidence in the soundness of its own conversion, and the safety of its spiritual state; for no soul destitute of a consistent, harmonious, well proportioned religious character, can rationally possess a good hope. This, then, will determine, also, the measure of the soul's solid spiritual joys, and above all, it will be the true criterion of the extent of its usefulness in the world; for it is not profession, nor hope, nor joy, but a *strong bright religious character*, that God uses as the instrument of blessing the world and influencing its moral destinies. Any thing, then, that furnishes an advantage for forming such a character, is of vital moment to the soul. In the formation of character *two forces* are required; the one to ward off from it and protect it against influences directly or indirectly hurtful, and the other to bring to bear upon the character in the most effective form, a *positively good influence*. *Restraints*, therefore, are as important in their place as the positive influence of good example. Now, he who connects himself with the church of God, will have the advantage of both these forces in forming his own religious character. He will have the restraints of a powerful *Christian sentiment*; and this is a far more efficient kind of restraint than that of mere precept and prohibition. He will find himself in the midst of a spiritual community, who, notwithstanding individual exceptions, are in the main characterized by a prevalent, exalted, moral sentiment. His remaining depravity, the lingerings of sinful pas-

sions and appetites, that are ever ready to break forth in the absence of restraints, will now be girt about and pressed in on all sides by this pervading sentiment of the Christian community. The influence of public sentiment on character, is often most striking and wonderful. How human depravity is developed, and with what rank luxuriance it grows in the midst of a *corrupt* public sentiment, some of the courts of Europe, for centuries, have furnished melancholy examples. And how it may be repressed, stunted, withered, and almost prevented from showing itself, by a widely diffused, lofty, Christian sentiment, the history of the Puritans amply testifies. The influence of such a sentiment is not the less, but the more powerful and controlling in its restraints, from its being a silent, unobserved influence, acting *every where* and *always*, like the constant and equal pressure of the atmosphere on all terrestrial objects. Happy is the man who in his spiritual conflict, in the great struggle of his soul to ward off the lawless violence of those causes that combine to injure his character, *thrice happy* he who can avail himself of the powerful, permanent, every where present restraints of a pure Christian sentiment! He has all the advantage of one of the great forces that form religious character. He has also the advantage of the direct and positive influence of *holy example*. For, calumniate Christians as the world may, it is still within the pale of the church that are to be found all the brightest and best examples of pure living piety. These must, by the very constitution of our nature, act powerfully in forming religious character. Such examples are *the*

practical exemplification, the embodying and exhibiting in every-day life, of the principles and sentiment of Christians. They are true religion *lived out*, and appealing to the cognizance and conscience of the man. They are the examples, too, of men of like passions with himself, and in similar circumstances. This assures him that, by the grace of God, it is practicable for *him* to make the same attainments. These examples, therefore, have an inherent life and warmth different from the marvellous and romantic histories of calendar saints. These are the examples of his now living brethren of the spiritual community. They take hold, therefore, on an active and powerful principle of his nature—the principle of *imitation*. These examples also operate on his *social* principles, and connect by a vital sympathy and union, their controlling influence with all the exercises of his heart. Now, if man is made to be influenced by example, if by a law of his nature he grows *like* those with whom he most associates, you can see at once the immense advantage in forming religious character possessed by him who joins God's Israel, and feels the constant influence of their holy example. Come with us, then, ye who have resolved to form a religious character. Escape from the lax moral sentiment, and the still worse example of the world. Come with us, we will do you good—we will throw around you the powerful restraints of a pure Christian sentiment, and rear bulwarks of imperishable strength between you and the dangers that threaten your character from without, whilst we will pour on you the light and warmth, the melting and moulding influence of Christian example, to form your inner man according to the model of the glorious gospel.

IV. Another advantage of the connexion is, that *you will have the holy sympathies, the prayers and the affections of this community to assist you in cultivating the graces of your own heart.* The supreme selfishness of the world makes its society in the main *heartless*. Each unrenewed mind is bent on its own individual interests and pleasures, in disregard or at the expense of others. An intimate sympathy and benevolent affection amongst such minds were not to be expected. Every man caring *only* for his own things, connects himself with his fellow men no farther than is necessary to secure his selfish ends, and beyond that leaves them to shift and struggle for themselves, as best they can. Some honourable *exceptions* to this, amongst worldly men, like all exceptions, only establish the *general rule*. But such is not the state of God's spiritual community; *they* have "not so learned Christ." I admit, that within the church you may find some heartless professors of religion, like Judas Iscariot of old. But it must also be admitted, that you will find there too, and *there only*, the play of the warmest, most generous and holy sympathies of regenerated human nature. Every pious heart feels a bond of union, a gush of spiritual sympathy connecting it with the renewed individual who joins this spiritual community. None of this household of faith have any rival interest, any unsanctified competition to produce jealousy and alienate them from their brother. They know his experience, his conflicts, his joys and griefs, his trials and temptations, his tastes, his desires, pursuits, hopes, and fears, for these are all their own. They feel, therefore, a high

and holy *congeniality* with him, which naturally begets an intimate, endearing, yearning, spiritual sympathy with him. They feel that he is one *of* them, and one *with* themselves; and knowing the warfare in which he has enlisted by joining them, and the hardness he will have to endure, the dangers and the tremendous struggle of his fight of faith, their congeniality and sympathy with him lead them, very naturally, to pour out their prayers to God in his behalf. Cannot you, my dear hearers, who are the older members of this church, testify to the truth of this in your recent experience? Have not your whole souls yearned over those who have lately become connected with you, and your ardent prayers gone up to heaven, that they may endure unto the end?

And now, with their congeniality and spiritual sympathy with him, and their fervent, importunate prayers for his eternal welfare, will not the purest affections of their hearts necessarily be called forth to him in the exercise of a true scriptural brotherly love? What an unspeakable advantage will all this be to one who has to cultivate the graces of the Spirit in his own heart. How can those graces grow and thrive in the cold and frosty atmosphere of selfishness that pervades worldly society? How can they grow in the dark and chilly air of the cloister? The whole doctrine of seclusion, of hermitages, monasteries and nunneries, contradicts its very genius, and is a libel on Christianity. The religion of the gospel is essentially a *social* religion. The first words of our Lord's prayer prove it to be so—"OUR Father." It is the religion of a *community* in its every-day duties and relations,

domestic, social, civil and political. Many of the Christian graces are purely of a *social* nature, founded on the domestic and social relations which bind human society together, and some of these graces refer *exclusively* to the spiritual community, such as brotherly love, charity, Christian reproof and exhortation, mutual prayer and mutual forgiveness of faults. Now, how can such graces be cultivated with any hope of success by the individual who does not connect himself with the church of God, but remains outwardly a member of the great community of a world lying in wickedness? No! he must join himself to the spiritual Israel, take advantage of the social principle of our nature, bring himself within the sphere of the sympathies, the prayers, and the affections of Christian brethren; then he will find that the spirit of devotion is delightfully *contagious*: heart will meet heart, like will beget like: a genial, social warmth will come over his soul, a spring time to the graces of his spirit, when the dews of Christian sympathy, and the balmy breath of prayer and Christian affection, will promote a new growth, a vigorous vitality. These are the circumstances, these the aids in connexion with the word and ordinances of God, by which the soul is to advance in the divine life till it receives the end of its faith. Come with us, then, ye who have vainly supposed that you could be as good without a profession of religion as with it, that you could cultivate the graces of the Spirit in your hearts, as well in the cold soil of the world, as in the sunny garden of your God. Come with us, and we will do you good. Our holy sympathies will distil on your hearts as the dew on Hermon:

our united prayers will rise to heaven in your behalf, the light and warmth of our pure brotherly love will form an atmosphere round your souls to cherish all your graces till they grow to an immortal maturity.

V. This connexion will give you the advantage of *that shield of God which is over this spiritual community, for it is a divinely defended and protected community.* The whole history of the church from its commencement, proves that it enjoys a divine defence and protection, not extended to any other community of mankind. When we contemplate the gigantic malice of earth and hell, their combined stratagems, their overwhelming majorities, their oft-repeated and violent attacks, the storm and thunder of their might against the weak and defenceless commonwealth of Israel; the conviction is irresistible that the great shield of Jehovah must have been held by his own almighty right hand over this community, to preserve them from utter annihilation. The truth and faithfulness of God are pledged for the defence and safety of the church, as they are *not* pledged to any other community. A few only of the numerous, great, and precious promises, respecting Zion, can now be cited. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me." "O, Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me." "Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor

alter the thing that has gone out of my mouth.”—
“No weapon formed against thee shall prosper.”
“God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved;
God shall help her, and that right early.” This is a
part of the “good which the Lord hath spoken concern-
ing Israel.” These are the pledges of his eternal love
and faithfulness, to guard his church as the apple of
his eye. As we have said, the very existence, pro-
gress, and perpetuity of the church, encountering, as
it has done, at every step, the malignant forces of
earth and hell, prove that there is an incessant, un-
seen, Almighty power of defence and protection ex-
clusively her own, and rendering her safety certain
amidst all the ruin and desolation of worldly commu-
nities and empires. Is it not an unspeakable advan-
tage in a world of danger, and amidst our mortal
weakness and our mighty invisible foes, to be con-
nected with this spiritual community, and brought
within the sphere of that all-comprehending and
irresistible defence and protection, which assures you
that “a hair of your head shall not perish?” Come
with us, then, ye who have hitherto held your peri-
lous position in the great community of the world
which is without spiritual protection from its God.
Escape from the tremendous exposure of the wilder-
ness to the city of our God. Come with us, we will
do you good. You shall be welcomed under the
great shield, and shall dwell at ease under the shadow
of the Almighty. Between you and all the dire
hostilities of earth and hell that war against your
souls, there shall be placed and held the “thick bosses
of Jehovah’s buckler.”

VI. LASTLY. By thus coming and casting in

your lot with the spiritual Israel, you will have the advantage of *participating in the exalted hopes and anticipations of this community*. The human mind, by its very constitution, is led to indulge in great hopes and high anticipations. There is an elevation, a scope and a vastness in the range of the passion of hope, which carry the soul above and beyond this world, and is no mean proof of its immortality. Now, no *worldly* community have plans and objects before them of sufficient amplitude and grandeur, to limit and satisfy the aspirations of deathless hope. The politics, diplomacy, and wealth of nations—the enterprise of empires, the conquest of the world, and the possession of its kingdoms, with all their glory, could not bring back hope from its sublime excursions, make it alight, fold its great wings, and rest contented on this globe. No! it mounts and soars still, leaving this world in the dim distance, and grasping at *The infinite* as its portion, and *The eternal* as its duration. Now, God's spiritual Israel is the only community on earth whose objects of hope and anticipation are sufficiently vast, lofty, and enduring, to satisfy the unlimited and all-grasping capacities of this eager passion. The objects of hope and anticipation to the church, are not confined within the narrow boundaries of earth and time. And yet, even her hopes that pertain to this world, are by far the most exalted and grand, that belong to its future history. They do not refer merely to the advancement of science, civilization, refinement, national wealth, aggrandizement, and glory. No! the hopes of the church fix on nobler results than these, yet to be realized in this fallen

world. They refer to the *moral* condition of man, and contemplate the grand issue of the world's conversion to God!

The church confidently anticipates that golden millennial age when this apostate globe, brought back in universal allegiance to its God, shall be pervaded with a righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which will render the kingdom of Christ triumphant, and restore to earth a portion of the innocence and bliss of its primeval paradise!—But the main objects of Israel's hopes rise above, and stretch far beyond this world. The most obscure, neglected, and forgotten member of this commonwealth, is permitted to indulge a hope more bright, more exalted, than ever blessed the mightiest potentate of earth. He is permitted to hope for the ultimate, *absolute perfection* of his *whole nature*, corporeal and spiritual!—to hope that his soul, though now environed by evil, and still suffering under the effects of the apostacy in Eden, will, by divine aid, struggle and break away from its present darkness and thralldom, grow in grace and knowledge, attain “the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus,” and be presented at last without spot, and blameless in love before the infinite God! Nor does he despair of this frail mortal part with which the soul is now connected. For that, too, redeeming love has made a kind provision, and hope looks forward to the *resurrection*; and the triumphant language of Christian anticipation, viewing Christ as the “first fruit,” is, “Who shall change our vile *bodies* and fashion *them* like unto his glorious body.” All the members of this spiritual

community are permitted to hope that the great Jehovah himself will be the eternal portion of their souls. They are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Renewed and united to their Saviour, reconciled, and at peace with their God, their souls panting and following hard after holiness, they anticipate seeing Jesus as he is, being like him, and holding an eternal communion face to face with the infinite Jehovah! They hope to enjoy this, too, in a "better country, that is a heavenly—a city which hath *foundations*, whose builder and maker is God."—"Far from noise, from tumult far, beyond the flying clouds, beyond the stars, and all *this* passing scene," Israel's hopes fix on a vast, glorious, *eternal* world—a world all light and love, for "God and the Lamb are the light thereof;" the world of harmonious, holy minds, forming thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, yet a world of unbroken peace, of unmarred congeniality, of unending repose; a world, too, of harps and songs, of triumphal processions and glad hosannahs; a world all pervaded with the most perfect models of immortal beauty, and the most stupendous disclosures of eternal truth; a world of mutual, *sinless*, social affections, of untiring, benevolent activity, where all the perfected powers of the undying mind will find full play, and the redeemed move harmoniously in their respective spheres, rising higher, and coming nearer to the eternal throne, in knowledge, holiness, and bliss, through an endless duration.

What objects of hope and anticipation to the commonwealth of Israel! The dim and distant glance that we can now take of them dazzles and blinds

mortal vision. What an advantage to be connected with this community, and to participate in such hopes and anticipations! What an influence it must have on the character—what a light it must shed on the way, and what a resistless attraction exert on the soul, in its onward and upward Christian career! Come with us, then, ye who have hitherto been without these hopes, and yet have felt the restlessness of this passion of your nature, in its struggles, bounding and beating against the barriers which the darkness and littleness of earth have reared around it. Oh, come with us; we will do you good, by bringing you to share with us the Christian's hope and anticipations of glory! Do you say you can have this hope between your own soul and God, though you are still outwardly connected with the world? You may for awhile; yet it will be shorn of its brightest beams, and but half enjoyed; for it is a social hope, borrowing rather than lending or losing lustre by being blended with the aggregate splendour of the common hopes of a great community. Come with us, then; be of the spiritual Israel; open your whole souls to the objects of their hopes and anticipations; enter, by a sacred sympathy, into a *participation* in these hopes and blissful prospects: then shall ye know what is the riches of God's grace and the hope of *your* calling, by feeling yourselves bound, by a new and nearer relation, to the blessedness and glories of an eternal heaven.

We see from this subject, in *the first place, what a distinguished privilege the young convert enjoys in being permitted to connect himself at once with the church of God.* What a *spiritual home*

does the church furnish. What a kind *mother nurse* does she prove to the “babes in Christ!” Here their spiritual infancy is watched over with a holy maternal tenderness! No capriciousness, no fickleness of principles and purposes, to betray the unsuspecting confidence of the young convert, or blight the first buddings of his gracious affections. Here shines the light of Christian knowledge, mildly attempered to his newly opened infantile eye! Here are the salutary restraints of a pure and powerful Christian sentiment, to repress and correct the ardent, undisciplined, inexperienced feelings of spiritual youth. Here is the power of *holy example*, to act on the imitative principle, and form the character in the very morning of the Christian life, when that principle is strongest, and the character most easily moulded! Here are strong spiritual sympathies, ardent unceasing prayers, holy yearning affections, forming an atmosphere around him, and furnishing him the greatest facilities for cultivating the graces of the Spirit in his own heart. Here is the broad wing of the Almighty, under whose feathers he may hide his infantile weakness—the mighty shield of Jehovah to protect him from all fatal harm in this most perilous and defenceless period of his whole Christian life! Here are objects of hope and anticipation sufficiently grand and exalted to furnish ample scope for the unwearied energies of this youthful capacity!! O, what a privilege for the young convert to be permitted at once to come directly within the pale of God’s church, and into the participation of such blessings! I trust, my dear hearers, that those of you who have lately

connected yourselves with this church, highly appreciate, and are determined to improve this, your distinguished privilege. I know, if your hearts are right, that you do;—Yes, the language of your souls this day, as you contemplate with adoring gratitude, the grace of God which has brought you into this connexion, will be—

“ Why was I made to hear his voice,
 And enter while there's room,
 When thousands make a wretched choice,
 And rather starve than come?”

O, regard this, your connexion, as the most sacred you can ever form on earth, and the *privilege* which it confers on you, as the greatest that you can ever enjoy this side heaven! And here, let me drop you one word of counsel. Beware, I pray you, of beginning *at once* to search out, dwell on, and talk of *the faults* of some professors of religion in the church with which you have become connected. Doubtless, it has its share of Judases, Simon Maguses, and Demetriuses. But, young converts, *you* had better let them alone! A disposition to catch and carp at their faults, will do *them* no good, and *you* a great deal of harm! It will certainly destroy, in a great measure, the benefit that you ought to derive from your connexion with the church. It will withdraw your attention from, and blind you to all the real excellency imbodyed in the Church, just as the man who is for ever looking through a smoked glass at the spots on the sun, soon becomes insensible to the magnitude and splendour of that glorious orb! I have *seen* the disastrous effects of this disposition, and solemnly warn you against it. It will foster spiritual pride, promote in you the growth and sway

of a censorious, self-righteous, meddling, overbearing, back-biting spirit, that will destroy your own peace, and disturb that of your brethren, prevent your growth in grace, injure your good name, annihilate your usefulness, and at last bring you into a striking resemblance to the very characters whose faults you thus dwell upon, and which you profess to mourn over and to hate.

Finally. We see from this subject, *what a solemn pledge the Church gives to those who enter her communion.* "Come thou with us, and *we will do thee good.*" This is a comprehensive promise, a great and solemn pledge! It is nothing less than a formal engagement to promote the spiritual and eternal good of each soul that becomes connected with her. We pledge ourselves, before God, angels, and men, to be "helpers" of that soul's "faith," to watch over, instruct, exhort, warn, charge, and rebuke it, with "all long-suffering," and with "the meekness and gentleness of Christ;" that we will exert ourselves to the utmost to assist it in securing all its spiritual and eternal interests; that joined heart and heart, and standing shoulder to shoulder, we will make common cause with it in the great fight of faith, and endeavour to impart a strength, and inspire it with a courage that will at last bring it off more than conqueror through him that loved it!! Now, it is high time that this church should lay to heart the overwhelming solemnities of this pledge, and ask itself before God to-day, how it has redeemed the same hitherto. Have we a feeling of individual responsibility in this matter? Have our lives and conversation, our holy influence, our

whole example, been such as to furnish a practical fulfilment of our great promise? Have we faithfully redeemed the pledge which we gave to those that have come into the church since we did? Have the older members of this church already gathered round and become acquainted with the converts that have lately joined them here? Do you feel a peculiar *parental* tenderness over these babes in Christ? Are you taking them by the hands, and teaching them to walk?—watching, yearning, praying over them at every step? Are you circumspect yourselves, peculiarly so, for their sakes, that you may give them the benefit of your Christian, holy example? In a word, have you, in solemn earnest, set about *doing them good* in every way possible in your present circumstances? These questions are laid upon the consciences of the older members of this church, to be answered silently to their God to-day! Would that we were fully awake to the vital importance of this matter; and that our young converts might enjoy from us those great advantages which God designed should result from their connexion with his church. Oh, “what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!”

Of one thing we may rest assured, the good we have promised to them can never be done—our pledge can never be redeemed with the stinted attainments and dwarfish standard of holiness, the backsliding barrenness and spiritual desolations, which so mournfully mark the history of many in this day who have long had a name and a place in the commonwealth of God’s Israel.

SERMON III.

“He went away sorrowful.”—MATT. XIX. 22.

THIS brief sentence is fraught with a deep and melancholy interest. It brings to view *a kind* of sorrow which makes an irresistible appeal to the sympathies of a regenerated heart—the sorrow of an ingenuous youthful mind, torn, by a concern for its future life, in conflict with its taste and its preference for the things of the present. Our text closes the evangelical narrative of that lovely young man who came running and kneeling at the feet of Jesus, asked him,—“Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?” A question of deeper, graver import, could scarcely be uttered by man. From the person who asked it, the manner in which it was put, and the person to whom it was addressed, we cannot doubt, but that it was spoken in sincerity, and with profound emotion. This young man was very serious—he was a true inquirer, and yet, for aught that the records of earth show, he never was any thing more than a *mere inquirer*. And *his* is one of a multitude of similar cases, in the history of men who enjoy the ministrations of the gospel, where the understanding has been fully convinced of the reality and importance of religion—the heart been affected with intense feeling on the subject, and the man impelled

to some efforts to secure his salvation, and yet, at last, he has voluntarily preferred the riches, or the pleasures of the world, to that eternal life of his soul, which, for a season, created much anxiety, and led to inquiry and effort for its attainment.

Men may thus forfeit their salvation, and plunge into the world, without becoming flagrantly vicious, or losing their reputation in the eyes of their fellow-men. The causes that widen the separation between God and an alienated soul, are not always strikingly perceptible to the individual himself, or to others around him. These causes generally operate, unseen by all but the Omniscient eye. The secret love of wealth, was the cause of this young man's departure from Christ, as a teacher and Saviour, to whom he had eagerly applied for direction and counsel in the concerns of eternal life. Yet this hidden love of mammon had not influenced him to become a thief, or a robber, or unjust, or an extortioner; nor did it probably after the date of his going away. We may reasonably suppose, that he continued a correct, moral, respectable member of society, and considered himself still disposed to pay great regard to religion. Nay, he doubtless, still expected to obtain eternal life, after he had completed the circle of those alluring pleasures which his great possessions promised. Now we may take the case of this young man, as an example which, in its principal features, will suit the condition of all those who have been awakened to serious concern for their salvation, but have banished their convictions and gone back to the world. As the cause of this sad lapse, there is always some secret

reserve—if not the love of wealth—the love of gay ungodly companions—the love of the applause and flattery of others—the love of dress and personal appearance—the desire to retain the interest which they excite towards themselves, by the exercise of a light, gay, worldly spirit. One or more of these, or it may be pride, or self-righteousness constitutes the starting point of their departure from their seriousness, from Christ and salvation. “He went away sorrowful.”

Let us now contemplate several things that mark this melancholy course of an individual, from a state of seriousness and concern for his soul, to utter thoughtlessness and stupidity in sin.

I. The first thing that strikes us, is, that this is not a course in which the man *loses all sensibility on the subject of religion at once*. He has some acute and indescribably mournful feelings, when he *commences* his departure from Christ, and gives up for the present his hope of securing eternal life. It would be strange, indeed, if the human heart could become callous at once, on a subject so deeply engrossing to all man’s dearest hopes and direst fears for two worlds! Who, but a fiend, could avoid some tender and even agitating emotions in that awful crisis of destiny, when the mind deliberately rejects the Saviour, and first commences to turn its back on the holy attractions of the cross? To the *young* man especially, that must be a most trying, tragic moment. To turn away from that loving crucified One, at whose feet the awakened soul has been kneeling, weeping, praying, and inquiring what it must do to be saved—from that Jesus, who still

yearns over the revolted, ruined soul—who still looks on the departing ingrate, in love and sorrow—who calls him to return by all that is melting in the crucifixion—by all that is winning and subduing in the blood of the atonement—who stretches out his pierced hands to lay gentle hold on that soul, as it is about to forsake its own mercies and lose eternal life—what, but a heart of adamant could, without feeling, break away from the Son of God, thus wooing, and warning, inviting, and entreating the lost sinner to return and be saved? To any mind of ordinary sensibility, in these first steps of its departure, some degree of sorrowful emotion is inevitable. But more especially will the individual experience a mournful regret, when, for the present, he relinquishes the prospect of heaven and eternal life. Man's self-love, or instinctive desire for happiness, would, in such a case, awaken feelings of sadness. The individual feels that he is immortal—that he has hopes which course onward through eternal years, and that provision ought to be made for his enjoyment, beyond the boundaries of earth and time. The heaven which the Bible reveals, is suited to these hopes, and to all the far-reaching desires and lofty aspirations of his spiritual nature, and is just what he craves, could he only obtain it without submitting to God's terms, and could he go to enjoy it *after* he has worn himself out in the pleasures of sin and the pursuits of the world. Hence, when he commences his departure from Christ, it is with a saddened heart—"he went away sorrowful." The scenery and blessed sunlight of paradise, are still in the distant perspective. He "casts a long-

ing, lingering look behind" him, on the joys at God's right hand, on the rivers of pleasure that are there for evermore. He is very sorrowful to forego the prospect of possessing them hereafter. But he loves "the world, and the things that are in the world" at present, after them his heart *will go*, though his judgment and conscience are impelling him in the opposite direction. He *is sorrowful*, but still he goes away, preferring the treasures of earth, to the unsearchable riches of Christ, the joys of time, to the bliss of eternity.

II. The steps in this melancholy departure from seriousness, *are gradual*—the individual making *no sudden and extreme change* in his habits of *outward* attention to religious observances. Such is the constitution of the mind that, in most cases, it cannot shift its habits suddenly, and pass readily to opposite extremes. The individual, therefore, who has been habituated to serious reflection and excited emotions on the great themes of religion, and who has been accustomed to the performance of its external duties, cannot at once reverse these habits. In such instances, the habitual action of the mind and heart, ordinarily ceases by a very *gradual* process, similar to that by which the waves of the agitated ocean continue after winds are hushed, to course on, though with a slow but sure diminution in volume and force, till at last they subside in a profound calm. If the man who, to-day, is deeply convicted of sin—*anxious about his salvation, weeping, and inquiring the way of life*—should, to-morrow, find himself totally reckless, hardened, and indifferent, the very *suddenness* of the change would startle

him, and prove a probable means of re-awakening a more intense concern for his salvation. But when Satan's wiles and the deceitfulness of his own heart are in sworn league to destroy his seriousness, to lead him away from Christ, and jeopard his eternal life, the plan is, to make the transition from anxiety and inquiry to thoughtlessness and hardened stupidity, *so gradual*, that at no one step shall the sinner be aware of his progress, till the last is taken. The awakened man is warned not to grieve away from his agitated bosom the Holy Spirit, and told that he may do this by simply delaying to come to Christ. Despite the warning, he still delays, and yet he does not perceive that he has lost aught of his seriousness or solicitude about his soul. After the lapse of some time, he ceases to go to the meeting for inquiry, where he once attended with an anxious, aching spirit. But he persuades himself, that this is no evidence of his declining concern for eternal life, as he now thinks his attendance on such a meeting is not necessary to his salvation, and has not been hitherto, of any marked advantage. He resolves, too, that he will compensate for quitting the place of inquiry, and the posture of an inquirer, by maintaining the more spiritual exercise of secret prayer. For awhile, he fulfils the letter of his resolve, retires alone, and repeats by rote a form of prayer. After some time, however, he becomes more remiss in this duty, engaging in it, only once, instead of twice or thrice during the day and evening, as formerly; it then dwindles into a few broken ejaculations, uttered in sleepiness and exhaustion, after he has retired to his pillow at night, and soon he

abandons it altogether. But he hopes to render an equivalent for this omission, by attending the weekly lecture and prayer-meetings of the church, which is more than he once did, and more than he sees many professors of religion now do. When a little farther advanced in this sad career, it seems to him, that he cannot well attend these meetings as punctually as he used to do, not, as he supposes, *because* he feels less interest in these religious services, but, somehow, his *circumstances* do not afford him as much leisure. So he gradually becomes less frequent in his attendance, till at last he ceases to be found in the place of social prayer. Now, lest conscience should be startled at this delinquency, he determines that he will be very punctual in his attendance on public worship, on the Sabbath, and that should the sanctuary be opened twice or thrice on that day, his willing feet shall that often tread its sacred courts. For awhile, this resolution is scrupulously fulfilled. But, in process of time, it seems to him, that the labours and cares of the week are so exhausting, that he needs a portion of that day for physical rest; and the argument is already at command, that he might *better* stay at home than to sleep, as he sees even members of the church doing every Sabbath, at public worship! And, as it is a universal concession that this *is* a *day of rest*, he ceases his punctual attendance in the sanctuary, justified in the step, as he thinks, by the plea, that his absence is necessary to recruit the vigour and promote the well-being of his physical nature.

Thus, by a gradual and unperceived abatement, he gives up his wakeful anxiety and efforts for sal-

vation, the process very much resembling the state of the mind, when approaching a condition of sound sleep. As we approach this condition, impressions on the senses become gradually weaker, the thoughts are gradually withdrawn from exciting subjects, and the mind gradually ceases its control over its own operations, till at last, all the powers are locked up in undisturbed repose. Now, in this physical process, no man is aware how far he has advanced towards a state of sound sleep by each successive step, nor does he know *when* the last is taken. He only knows, when aroused again, that he has been asleep. So the awakened sinner, by a process gradual and unperceived at the time, sinks into profound and guilty slumbers in his sins, and will scarcely know that he is asleep, or how he came into that state, till God shall either awaken him again by the convicting influences of his Holy Spirit, or startle and astound him, by the bursting light of a ruined eternity. And,

III. This leads to the obvious remark in the *third place*, that *this is a most DECEPTIVE course*. It is a melancholy spectacle to see what deep deception is practised on the sinner's mind, in his progress from religious solicitude, to hardened security in his impenitence. He is kept, as by some diabolical spell, from the knowledge of his true moral condition, all the while that he is casting off his seriousness, turning away from his Saviour, and foregoing the hope of eternal life. The retrograde movement is so equable, and his soul is borne along by so indirect an influence, that at no point in his downward career, is the sinner sensible how far he has gone.

or whither he is tending. Had he, on some occasion, formed a decided, bold determination, that then, and there, he would stifle conviction, shake off his seriousness, and plunge headlong into the world again, this would constitute a point in his course of which he could never afterwards be ignorant. But so far from taking at once a stand like this, he is unwilling to admit even to himself that he is actually ceasing to care for his eternal life, and turning away, or that he will turn away from the compassionate Son of God. He persuades himself that he really does not desire to pursue this course. The thought of doing so is even painful to him. True, he feels that all is not right, conscience is not satisfied, and yet he hardly knows whether or not *he* is criminal in the matter. That there is a difference between his religious feelings now, and some time ago, he must admit; but then he supposes that it is only *the novelty* of his first serious emotions wearing off, and he knows that by a law of mind *that* could not be expected to continue. He is aware, too, that he feels more keenly now than he did some time before, the allurements and urgency of temporal interests, and has a stronger desire to pursue and possess the things of the world; but he infers that it is not inconsistent with seriousness and piety itself for him to feel thus, for he sees many respectable members of the church who are driving business with an ardour, and an absorbing interest, and who are fired with "the love of money," and are accumulating riches with a zeal and a success, that far outstrip some men of no religious pretensions. He naturally concludes that if these members of the church can do so, without

losing *their* piety, he may do the same without detriment to his seriousness or danger to the interests of his soul. Thus is he deceived and kept from the commencement to the close of his wretched career insensible to any striking and ominous change in his feelings. He sees not a way-mark to indicate his progress in this melancholy course. In his own apprehension his feelings to-day are not perceptibly on the decline, compared with what they were yesterday, or even a week or a month ago. And then his mind, in this backward wandering, still has moments of solemn reflection, and of excited sensibility too, not unlike those which marked the period when his attention was first awakened to the interests of a future life. He is assured therefore, as he supposes, that he has not given up *all* concern for his soul, though he may be inclined to admit that, on the whole, his zeal in this matter is less fresh and fervid than formerly. But to keep this admission from ringing the alarm to conscience, and from rousing his torpid sensibilities, he forms good resolutions of cultivating deeper feelings on this subject, and of actually repenting and turning to God with all his heart, at some more "convenient season" *in the future*. He feels great complacency in the strength and sincerity of his determination to attend to the eternal interests of his soul, some time hereafter with more earnestness and anxiety than ever before. He hopes too that the time will come, when all his relations in life, and all the circumstances and incidents of his condition and personal history, will wonderfully coincide, and concur to enable him with ease to fulfil this determination, and to seek and secure

his eternal life. Thus these idle resolves, and fallacious hopes respecting the future, lull all fears and apprehensions of losing his present seriousness, till deep deception snares his soul, and entangles it in toils, never to be broken but by the convulsive struggles of death and despair!—till God, justly provoked, gives him over to “strong delusion, that he may believe a lie,” and dream on of a future repentance, a faith, a hope and a heaven, that will never be his!

IV. Another fact deserving special notice, is that, when this course terminates, as it will ultimately, in the loss of all serious concern for the soul, *the insensibility of the sinner then is very great.* The fearful career that we are contemplating is pre-eminently adapted to harden the heart. It induces a callousness, an induration of every susceptibility of tender impression, which constitutes *God's mark* on the guilty ingrate, who has despised his religious birthright, done despite to the Holy Spirit, rejected and trodden under foot the Son of God, trifled with his own convictions and spurned that eternal life which for a season he “sought carefully and with tears.” Nor is this mark stamped upon the sinner *arbitrarily.*

In the awakening, and relapse of the soul, we can trace the operation of causes adapted according to the very constitution of the mind, to produce the profound and imperturbable stupidity which succeeds. During the period of religious excitement, the soul is necessarily subject to an incalculable draught on its natural sympathies. Its whole capacity of deep and troubled emotion, is taxed to the utmost. The feelings are wrought up to such a pitch

of intensity, that when they begin to descend they must, by a law of our nature, sink far below their ordinary level. In the grief of a sudden and sore bereavement, we often witness an exhaustion and collapse of the sensibilities, that seem to dry up the fountain of his tears, and for a season petrify the mourner in a strange and calm indifference to every thing, even to the sources of his own sorrow. The same is equally true of all that anxiety and anguish of the awakened sinner which fail of bringing him to Christ, for healing and peace. His moral susceptibilities have been stimulated and wrought upon intensely, by the motives which God has pressed upon him, during the season of his seriousness. Think, for a moment, my hearers, what an agitating excitement must be produced, by the motives which the Holy Spirit brings to bear on the sensibilities of an awakened soul. His ruin as a lost sinner—his heinous guilt, in the sight of a holy God—the awful perils of his present impenitent condition—God's wrath now abiding upon him, frowns, darkness, and curses hanging over his pathway here, and the woes of an eternal hell, in prospect hereafter, all plying his passion of fear! Then, on the other hand, all the everlasting love of God in the gift of his Son, the life of sorrow and the dying compassion of Jesus—all the wonders, and all the glories of the cross, bearing upon the sinner's sense of gratitude, and of infinite obligation. Pardon, and peace, and joy in believing now—divine protection, smiles, sunshine and showers of spiritual blessings on his way here, and eternal triumphs and seraphic ecstasies ineffable hereafter in heaven, bearing directly on the passion of

hope, and all these motives presented in the illumination, and by the unseen, but Almighty influences of the Holy Ghost! What must be the effect of a stimulus, so incalculably powerful as this, on the susceptibilities of the soul? Why, that soul *must* either sweetly yield to the influence, and experience a change, that will ever afterwards hold it subject to be thus swayed, or it *must resist* this awful aggregate of motive, and experience in consequence a prostration, an exhaustion, a swooning and spiritual lethargy that will paralyze all its powers in a seared and senseless inactivity. This truth receives confirmation from the analogy furnished in the use of natural stimuli. The more potent such stimulus, the deeper and more dreadful is the physical depression that ensues. Of this fact *delirium tremens* is an awful illustration! But the sinner who has been thus stimulated by the motives of God's truth, and had all his powers roused and held for a season in intense excitement, and who then casts off his seriousness, has something more than the stupifying languor that succeeds mere stimulation; he has the *hardening* influence exerted by *the positive and powerful resistance* which he has made to these motives, and to the strivings of the Holy Spirit. These two causes, combined and operating in their full force unchecked, will at last present the sinner as a spectacle of profound insensibility to the eternal life of the soul, appalling to the universe. The poet's couplet, originally applied to the atheist, but faintly describes the spiritual condition of such a one:

“In him, all nature's sympathies are still,
His bosom owns no throb, his heart no thrill.”

“Twice dead and plucked up by the roots,” is he not in a condition sadly portentous of becoming fuel for the fire that is never quenched?

V. It is obvious to remark, in this connexion, that when this course ends as now described, in a total loss of all thoughtfulness and in so profound insensibility on the entire subject of religion, *it leaves the soul in a state from which all prospect of its recovery is extremely dark and doubtful.* It is proper here to recall your attention to the sad and ominous fact in this melancholy narrative, that after this young man had refused the conditions of eternal life, and “went away sorrowful,” neither sacred nor profane annals utter a syllable in reference to his subsequent religious state! Our text constitutes the closing sentence of his moral history on earth. We have no record informing us, that this amiable youth was one of the thousands converted on the day of Pentecost, or that he was a member of the first Christian church at Jerusalem, or a follower of Paul, or of any other apostle. To the ear of the soul, *the very silence* of God’s oracles respecting him, has an articulate, piercing utterance more powerful than words, telling the guilty hopelessness of his condition! After the period to which our text refers, he probably never raised a serious inquiry on the subject of his salvation, never again felt any deep or special concern about eternal life. It is an affecting fact, amply attested by the observation of all pastors who have been long in the field of labour, that those who have been once deeply convicted of sin, and have gone through the ordinary steps of anxiety, agitation, weeping, praying and serious inquiry re-

specting salvation, and then have turned back and sunk again into the deep sleep and security in sin, which follow, are the last, and rarest cases of conversion that ever occur under the ministrations of the gospel! Two reasons present themselves here, to prove the condition of such to be wofully dark and hopeless. First, all that is new, and striking in the influences of the Holy Spirit, and in the motives from God's word which once awakened and startled them, has now become familiar, and, as it were, worn out upon them. All the means of grace are robbed of that exciting novelty which they had, when for the first they were accompanied with a divine light, and energy in awakening the soul. All that was strange and new, and urgently noticeable in the very feeling itself of being awakened is now gone. On the great theme of eternal life, all their sensibilities have already been once thoroughly exhausted. The whole soul has been burnt over, scathed and blackened by the lightnings of the divine law, and the fire, and the hammer of God's Spirit and word, having failed to melt or to break the heart of stone, have spent their combined action on it only to result in an increased hardness rivalling that of the adamant itself! The power of resistance also, which such persons exercise, and which has been necessary to enable them after all their anxieties to turn away from the Son of God, is greatly augmented and fortified. O! how hopeless is their condition! The second reason why they are never likely to be rescued from this perilous state, is that they have an unconquerable dislike, and even a kind of horror at the thought of being RE-awakened. The remembrance of their

former seriousness comes over them, like a dark and troubled dream, which they instinctively wish may never be repeated. They suppose too that they have gone as far and done as much to secure eternal life as they can, and that if they are ever saved, it will have to be by some mystic, charm-like influence which shall overpower them, and do the work in an instant without requiring of *them* any special concern or application of mind in the matter. Hence they greatly dread the prospect of being convicted of sin and really awakened again, of going through tedious days or weeks of fruitless anxiety, weeping and prayer as they have heretofore done. The mere thought that they should again have the awful disclosure of their guilt and ruin, the agitating fears and forebodings of God's wrath, and should feel the strivings of his Spirit, and the urgency of all the motives to repent and submit to Christ as they once did, fills them with revolting and horror. And as they have resolved for the present to cling to the world and live on impenitent, they therefore make a decided and active *resistance* to all efforts and means used for their awakening and conversion. This, together with the awful probability that the Holy Spirit has abandoned, or will soon abandon them judicially, renders their recovery and salvation, to human view, amongst the most doubtful and improbable of future events. The compassionate Son of God, pitying angels in heaven, and weeping saints on earth, may yearn over them and pour upon them the tide of their sympathies and the melting strains of their expostulation and entreaty; but they feel not, they hear not, they heed not all the combining influ-

ences of heaven and earth for their salvation! They have gone away from Christ "sorrowful" in the commencement, and their gloomy and only prospect now is, to wander on in eternal banishment from his presence, and the glory of his power!

LASTLY. This course which we have been describing, when persisted in, *renders the sinner liable to a more keen and cutting remorse through time and in eternity, than a career of ordinary impenitence.*

My impenitent hearers of this class, however reckless and hardened you may become, you can never wholly forget that you have once been awakened by the Spirit of God to deep seriousness and agitating solicitude respecting the eternal life of your souls. All your subsequent unconcern and immoveable stupidity, can never annihilate from the records of memory, the solemn fact that the Holy Ghost *has striven* with you, and that you *have had* a season of aching anxiety about your salvation. That fact, once registered on the tablet of the soul, will remain there through the immortality of your being! And it is that fact which lays the foundation for a bitter regret and consuming remorse, which can *only be felt by the once awakened sinner.* During certain periods of your present life, I am aware, you may manage to give over this ungracious fact to a partial and temporary oblivion. In the days of your prosperity you will not be troubled with the sad remembrance of your former shipwrecked seriousness. But, what security have you that in those inevitable seasons of adversity which are the common lot of mortals, you will not have visi-

tations from the past, presenting obliterated leaves of memory, legible again, that will harrow your very soul? When death desolates your home and dashes from your lips the hitherto sparkling and overflowing bowl of domestic joy, and wrings your heart with a lonely anguish, which turns in vain to any earthly source for healing; when you feel that God's frown is upon you, and that you are shut out from *his* sympathies and solace, memory will then awake and bring vividly before you that past precious season of your seriousness, when *God* wooed you to *his* bosom as your asylum from all the woes of your mortal and immortal being: and the remembrance of the slight you then offered to his grace, and the deliberate manner in which you spurned his mercy, will pierce you with an indescribable regret and remorse! So when your own brief life shall close, and you lie down to die, and you feel that you must then be for ever torn from that world which you preferred and clung to, instead of to Christ and to eternal life—when earth is receding and fading from your view, and eternity just opening the vision of its realities upon your soul, O! how will the recollection of that favoured period, when God pleaded with you, and you were almost persuaded to prepare for these solemnities, come over your heart with a train of regrets and remorse, cold and cutting as the edge of that knife which is then severing the ties between soul and body! The thorn in *your* dying pillow will wind deeper, and pierce with a keener smart than that in the pillow of him who has never been awakened. And, after the enhanced pangs of your dissolution are over, and you

have stood before the tribunal of your God, and received the sentence of your final doom, as you go away in heavy wo, from the glories and the bliss of a lost heaven, you will remember that here on earth you once had a "day of merciful-visitation;" when God by his powerful word and Almighty Spirit, by his ministering servants, by the solemnities of the Sabbath and the sanctuary, by the prayers and tears of his people, by the sympathies of the awakened, and the songs of the converted around you, entreated, and conjured you, to secure for yourself the joys of this bright world! You then "felt the powers of the world to come;" your heart was tender, you wept and prayed, and at one time, were, perhaps, on the very point of yielding yourself unreservedly to the Saviour, were within a single step of the favour of God, and a title to this heaven; but you "went away," and lost for ever the infinite blessings then within your reach! O! the regret, the deep and everlasting remorse, that will corrode and canker the soul, as memory haunts you with the spectres of the murdered hours of your period of seriousness and anxiety about salvation. "This your way is your folly;" it is a gloomy and troubled way, beyond that of ordinary impenitence. It will mingle an element of wo in your eternal doom, that will not be found in the perdition of those who have never enjoyed and despised a season of awakening and concern respecting the future life of the soul! Remorse, *remorse*, for having grieved the Spirit of God, stifled your own convictions, contemned the mercies of your own seriousness, and spurned the joys of heaven pressed on your acceptance, will con-

stitute that undying scorpion of hell, whose insufferable stings will inflict on you the giant pang, and extort from you the great sweat of damnation's agony!

In view of this subject, permit me, *in the first place*, to plead with you, my young friends, who are still capable of feeling tenderly respecting your salvation, *not to trifle with your religious sensibilities, and harden your hearts against God*. If you remain impenitent till you are more advanced in life, and conscience then becomes roused, to make you see your danger and your duty, you will look back with unspeakable melancholy, to the present time, and wish in vain then, that you possessed the capability of tender and keen emotion, which you now do. Prize and improve this spring-time of your youthful hearts—this period of easily excited sensibility. What a blessed facility it gives you for securing eternal life! If you could be with pastors when they converse with the middle-aged and the old, and urge *them* to be reconciled to God, and could you hear them sigh and lament over the loss of “the dew of their youth,” their tender and easily awakened feelings at that period; could you see, as we sometimes do, the awful consequences of wasting the generous and acute sensibilities of the young heart in sin; O! did you know what a dire and hopeless hardness and stupidity sear the souls of those who have long resisted the influences of the means of grace, you would not dare take one step in so perilous a career! You can *now feel* on the great subject of your salvation. You can be melted into tears at the love and sorrows of Calvary. The fa-

your of God and the hope of heaven, still exert a subduing influence on your hearts, and stir you to serious thought, and some effort to secure the interests of your souls. But if you go away, refusing offered mercy, rejecting Christ, grieving the Holy Spirit, stifling your convictions, and banishing serious thought and emotion, you too will sink down into the "waveless calm, the slumber of the dead," and wake no more till "trumpets call you" to your eternal doom!

Finally. A word to those of you whose melancholy course and condition have now been described, and I shall have finished my appeal on this occasion.

You have had your seasons of deep solicitude respecting your eternal well-being, and you have been led earnestly to inquire, what you must do to be saved. But, you have gone away from the Saviour, abandoned gradually all seriousness on the subject, and have had a long interval of unconcern and reckless stupidity. This being your state, permit me to ask you a question or two, which I devoutly pray the Spirit of God may carry with point to your consciences and hearts. Has that blessed aggrieved Spirit returned to your deserted souls lately, and awakened in you again some tender, solemn feeling? Have you been induced to think seriously about your salvation? Have you recently been urged to make some efforts, secretly, if not openly, to secure eternal life? O! is there to-day a lingering emotion of tenderness and solemnity, a silent aching of your hearts, in view of the sad truths presented in this discourse? My dear hear-

ers, this is the Spirit's returning "rising beam," after the long night of your insensibility. O! hail it! O! fan the spark by the breath of incessant, fervent prayer! Let the goodness of God, in again giving you one moment of serious thought and tender feeling on this subject, melt you into contrition at his feet. It is a wonderful display of "the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering," that God should permit his insulted Spirit still to hover nigh, and spread the wing of his gracious influences over you.

Sinner, *once awakened* sinner, this may be your *last call!* God, not willing that you should perish, has sent the Holy Dove to urge you this once more to make your peace with heaven. This is the reason why "thy hard and impenitent heart" has this momentary feeling of tenderness and concern about salvation. Trifle but *this once more*—grieve that Spirit away *for this time only*, and God may depart from you for ever, give you up to an incurable hardness of heart, and seal you the changeless victim of your own folly, till "the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men!"

SERMON IV.

“In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”—PHIL. ii. 15.

ONE of the most striking characteristics of Paul's epistolary writings, is his anxiety and zeal to promote the personal holiness of Christians. The ingenuity and urgency with which he brings every variety of motive adapted to advance their spirituality, and elevate the standard of piety amongst the early disciples, is no doubtful proof, that he saw the relations and importance of personal holiness in a light in which they are not ordinarily viewed. The Apostle was a true Christian philosopher. He had studied God's plan of redeeming our world, with the care and profound interest which its intrinsic importance deserved. He had contemplated the character of the world that was to be redeemed, the kind of agency or instrumentality adapted to secure its redemption, the design of God in organizing and perpetuating a Church on earth, and the grand end to be subserved, by detaining the followers of Christ in this state of probation, instead of taking them at once to a state of glory. In this investigation, the discriminating mind of Paul clearly discovered, that the influence of the vital piety of Christians stood inseparably connected with the best interests of the human race for two worlds.

This he knew to be the main instrumentality ordained of God for the redemption of men. And, accordingly, we find that in all his epistles, this subject, the personal holiness of Christians, is prominent. In all the doctrines, precepts, and exhortations, which he presents, his ultimate aim is the attainment of this great end. In his letter to the Christians at Philippi, he exhorts them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, and encourages them to do this, by the gracious assurance that it is God that works, and will work in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. But, lest they should think that their duty began and ended with themselves exclusively, he goes on to say—"Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

I shall take occasion from these words,

I. To notice *the kind of world* in which Christians live—"a crooked and perverse nation."

II. *The kind of influence* which Christians are to exert upon the world—"among whom ye *shine as lights* in the world;" and

III. Their *obligations* to exert this influence.

According to this plan, your attention is,

I. Directed to *the kind of world* in which Christians live,—“A crooked and perverse nation.”—These two terms, “crooked and perverse,” have reference both to the *opinions* and *practice* of the world; and the least that they can mean in this connexion, is, that the world is *erroneous* in its opinions, and *wrong* in its practice.

That both these allegations are true, human history amply attests. I refer, of course, to the *religious* opinions and practice of the world. It is a *crooked* world, then, in respect to the opinions which it entertains of the ever blessed God. The majority of the world rarely think of God at all; and when they do bestow a passing thought upon him, it is only to take some distorted view of his character. The opinions of the world respecting God, are divided into three great classes:

I. Some men can see nothing in God but the attributes of an *almighty and gloomy tyrant*.—They regard him as a being that has set himself in opposition to *their* happiness, arbitrarily imposing restraints on them, and through a capricious malevolence, denouncing infinite woes as the consequence of their sins. The riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, they cannot see, though they themselves are participants, to a large extent, in these blessings. They never contemplate God, as affixing the penalty to his law, and punishing the finally incorrigible rebel, through that infinite benevolence that seeks to prevent sin, and promote the holiness and happiness of the universe. And, because the gospel makes the requirements of faith, and repentance, and a holy life, and threatens a sorer punishment to those who wilfully reject its precious provisions; they never see the glories of divine mercy, in which God there exhibits himself. Their entire opinion of God, is, that he is “a hard master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strewed.” This is an extensively prevalent opinion in the world, alike de-

grading to the infinite majesty of Jehovah, and injurious to the souls of men.

II. But there is a *second class* of men, who entertain opinions of God equally erroneous, though they are precisely the opposite extreme of those just noticed. This class think him "to be altogether such a one as themselves." They regard God as taking but little concern in the affairs of this world. They view him as a very great and good being—*too* great and *too* good to busy himself with the petty interests of men, or to be strict to mark their iniquities in this world. They suppose that God has very much the same estimate of things which they have; that he views their character and conduct very much as they do themselves; that he is too merciful ever to permit his creatures to be lost and miserable, let them do what they may.—Such are the latitudinous views which they have of the whole character of God, that they indulge the vague hope, that irrespective of their moral character, their taste, their habits, and the entire tenor of a sinful life, he will make them all alike happy in a future state. They have no belief in the attribute of his retributive justice. They are a "crooked" class. Their views are so wholly distorted, that they see nothing in the character of God but a blind, indiscriminate, unmingled pity, that will arbitrarily bless all rational creatures with everlasting happiness, whatever their character and moral conduct may be.

III. There is a *third class*, who think of God as a kind of *personification of universal nature*. The evidences of his physical omnipotence, which

they see in the wonders of creation, in all that is sublime in the scenery of earth and ocean by day, and the starry heavens by night; these, in their opinion, constitute God—all the God in which they believe. Their notions of God are confined exclusively to one natural attribute—his *omnipotence*. They exclude all his moral perfections, and even their opinion of Omnipotence differs not materially from the old pagan philosophy, respecting a blind First Cause, acting with irresistible power, in producing all the changes that pass upon matter. Hence, they use the term *nature* to designate all that they mean by God. It is a vague notion of some kind of blind power, that acts irresistibly, and at random, in the great chain of physical cause and effect. That God is a righteous *moral* governor, holy, just, wise, rewarding and punishing his subjects according to their character and deeds, that he is faithful and true, that he is the author of a glorious plan of redemption, in which he exercises infinite mercy to the guilty and the lost, through the atonement of Christ, these things never enter into their conceptions of God!

How true it is, that “the world by wisdom knew not God,” but “became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.” In respect to its opinions about God, this is the kind of world in which Christians live—a crooked world, where the most distorted and erroneous views of the character of the blessed God prevail. But

2. It is a world as *perverse in practice*, as it is crooked or erroneous in opinion. This is but the legitimate consequence of distorted views of the Divine character. Wrong opinions on any practical subject, *necessarily* lead to wrong practice. The *perverseness* of the world is modified by the three classes of erroneous opinions respecting God, which constitute its crookedness. Those who regard God only as an almighty, arbitrary tyrant, who has set himself in capricious array against their happiness, will, of course, manifest an open hostility to Him. Their enmity is stirred by every thing associated with God. They regard him as their enemy, and they treat him as such. They practise an unblushing and determinate rebellion! They openly resist his authority, reject all his claims, violate his laws, and attempt to vindicate their conduct in doing so, by the plea, that all the restraints which God imposes on them, are wanton abridgments of their happiness, and evidences that God inclines to make them miserable, for the mere sake of their suffering. This class of practice, wrong, perverse practice, includes all the neglecters of church and divine ordinances—those who violate the Sabbath—who refuse to read their Bibles—reject the gospel in wrath, and set themselves in open and avowed opposition to all religion. Again. Those whose crooked, distorted opinions of God lead them to regard him as a being of but one attribute, and that a blind, indiscriminate mercy, which will save all, let them live as they may, pursue a practice different from that just noticed, though equally perverse and wrong. They turn the grace of God into licentiousness. They

practically reject the gospel, because they have such views of the mercy of God, that the provisions of the gospel are to them *unnecessary*. They feel no concern to have the moral character to which the gospel is designed to form man, nor to pursue the course of conduct it prescribes, nor to comply with the conditions of salvation which it reveals, nor to exemplify the pure and lofty spirit it inspires. They give up the reins to passion and appetite, not through an avowed and open resistance to the claims of God upon them to be holy, but because God is so good that he will not punish them for their sins. Thus they violate his law, reject the gospel, and indulge without restraint in sin, professing all the while to honour God's benevolence and mercy, so much as to believe that he will take care of their happiness hereafter, whatever may be their character and practice here. This class of perverse practice, includes all those who support and maintain latitudinarian schemes of religion, or, who have a liberality of sentiment that makes it a matter of comparative indifference where they attend the administration of the gospel, or whether they attend it and maintain any outward forms of religion at all. They live at ease, "serve divers lusts and pleasures," profess great regard for God in words, and in works deny him; their hearts and lives as uninfluenced by the quickening, transforming, and purifying spirit of the gospel, as though they were arrayed in the most open and virulent unbelief, and hostility to God and his holy word.

The last class of perverse practice of the world, results from those crooked views of God, which

make him nothing more than a blind physical cause of the wonders of creation. Such views lead to *practical* atheism. There are those under the gospel whose practice shows that they have no clear belief of the existence of God. They live a *purely animal* life, follow their instincts and their appetites, seldom, or never think of an hereafter: God is not in all their thoughts; they seem to have no sense of moral obligation, pay no regard to the word, worship, and ordinances of God, evince no religious sensibility on any occasion, and are literally in practice "*without God in the world!*" They have no states of mind, no emotions, and they put forth no actions, that are influenced by a serious and practical belief of the being of a God! To supply their physical wants, and to attain mere physical enjoyment, is the supreme aim, the great governing purpose of their lives! Their whole practice is regulated exclusively with reference to these. Besides these, there is a class whose speculative opinions respecting God are correct. They admit the truth of the Bible in the representations which it makes of the Divine character; they admit the claims of God in the gospel; the necessity of complying with its terms of salvation; they assent to the whole theory of revealed religion, and yet their *practice* is as perverse as though they entertained no such views, and made no such admission. They disregard the Divine law—reject the offers of mercy—continue impenitent and unbelieving—live in sin, and put far off the evil day. This class of perverse practice, includes all those who pay an external attention to religion, contribute to its support, and

conform to its outward observances, but yield not their hearts to its inward and controlling spirit—a strangely perverse practice, more criminal, in some respects, than any of the other classes noticed. Such is the kind of world in which Christians live. A world pervaded with distorted views of God, and the very foundations of its moral practice out of course; a world greatly erroneous in opinion, and intensely sinful in practice. Is there no hope of some kindly influence that can be brought to bear on it, to correct its errors and reform its practice? Yes; and this leads me,

II. To notice, in the *second place, the kind of influence which Christians are to exert upon it.* “Amongst whom ye shine as lights in the world.” There is an allusion here, to the heavenly bodies that supply our globe with light. Christians, in a moral or spiritual sense, are to be to the rest of mankind, what the sun, moon, and stars are, in a natural sense, to our world—the *great and ruling lights* of the system.

1. I remark then, in the first place, that as the light of the heavenly bodies is clear and undubious, so the influence of Christians on the world ought to be a *decided and unequivocal CHRISTIAN influence.* No one can be in doubt whether the sun is shining during the hours of the day. His beams carry with them an irresistible evidence. No one can make it a serious question, whether or not the moon is travelling in her serene splendour through the nightly sky. Her own soft radiance cannot be mistaken. Nor can it, for a moment, be doubtful whether or not the cloudless vault of heaven by night, is stud-

ded with innumerable stars, blending their beams through boundless space, and sending their far off light to our world. The light of all these celestial bodies is clear and undubious. It cannot be counterfeited or mistaken. Clouds may intervene between those bodies and our world, and obscure the brightness of their rays, but no one doubts that what light we still enjoy, is derived from them, and that they, in themselves, are bright and serene as ever. Now, the requirement of our text is, that Christians should shine as these lights in the world. The influence which they are to exert upon it, is to be a *decided, unequivocal CHRISTIAN influence*. Their opinions respecting the attributes of God—the nature of his government—the character, condition, and prospects of man under that government—their views of the great doctrines of religion—their knowledge of all the truths of revelation must be comprehensive, clear, correct, and scriptural—decidedly the opinions, views, and knowledge of Christians, who are taught of God, who receive the things of the Spirit, and discern spiritual things. It must not be doubtful whether or not they are walking in *the truth*, any more than it is doubtful whether or not the sun is shining at noon. Their enlarged, enlightened, consistent, scriptural views of God's truth, are the only remedial influence that can be brought to bear on the crooked and overgrown errors of the world. They are, in this respect, the light of the world, and they are to shine just as the heavenly bodies do. Ignorance, doubt, and uncertainty, must not cloud their minds. The light which they send forth must not be like that which forms the

lunar bow on the mists of night. Sent forth from a mind "rooted and grounded" in the faith, and growing in knowledge, it must be clear, unequivocal, resplendent as the sun's meridian ray. It must contrast vividly with the darkness of the world, and be easily distinguishable from all those false lights that result from sparks of the sinner's own kindling. The *practice*, equally with the opinions of Christians, ought to be a *decided, unequivocal* CHRISTIAN practice. No actions of the Christian's life should appear *doubtful*. There is nothing doubtful in the course of the heavenly bodies, as they shine upon the world. They obey strictly those physical laws by which their revolutions are to be governed. There are no uncertain, equivocal movements of those celestial orbs. Their paths through the immensity of space, can be calculated with minutest accuracy. These orbs our text presents as the models of the Christian's practice. His whole conduct is to be *decidedly Christian*. An open, straight-forward, well-defined course, must be his, like the pathway which the sun marks in the heavens. Not only in the direct services of religion, in social and public worship, must his practice be a scriptural, spiritual practice, known and felt to be such, but in all the relations of life, and in all its ordinary pursuits, the same clear, decided, unequivocal practice, must appear. As a father, a husband, a friend, and a member of society, his whole conduct must be that of a decided *Christian* father, a *decided Christian* husband, a *decided Christian* friend and member of society. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, it must be as apparent

as the sunbeams at noon, that he is doing all to the glory of God. There must be no ambiguity about his actions. They must all be manifestly right, dictated by Christian motives, done in the spirit of sincere and universal obedience, and conformed to the requirements of God's holy law. In respect to the main actions of his life, there must be no more doubt as to their decided Christian character, than we doubt whether the sun is risen, and is pouring his full-orbed splendours on our world. Such, in part, is the kind of influence which Christians are to exert on the world, a *decided, unequivocal* CHRISTIAN influence, as contradistinguished from all counterfeit and doubtful influences which are brought to bear on man. And this is the only redeeming influence, under God, that can ever reach and rectify the perverse practice of the world.—When Christians thus hold forth the word of life in clear, decided, intelligible, straight-forward, Christian actions, there is some hope that the world's obliquity of practice will be remedied, and that seeing their *good* works, it will be led to glorify their Father in heaven. But

2. As the heavenly bodies give also a *steady, permanent* light, so the influence which Christians are to exert on the world, must be a *steady, permanent influence*. The sun does not shine resplendently one hour, and then veil himself in impenetrable darkness the next. Nor does the moon shed her silvery light on land and sea, and again capriciously withdraw it, leaving night suddenly to resume its dark domain. Nor do the stars glitter on the dome of heaven for a moment, only to retire

and render the gloom that would succeed more profound and appalling. All these celestial bodies shine on in their destined spheres and seasons, with steady, permanent, unabated light. Clouds may be rolled between the eye of the spectator and these resplendent orbs, but high above the mist and storm, they shine on with unquenched ray, serenely calm. It is thus the Christian is to shine, as these lights in the world. His influence is to be *steady* and *permanent* as the beams of suns and stars. In accordance with this, God himself declares, that "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The influence, then, which Christians are to exert on the world, must not be a fickle, fitful influence. It will not do to burst and blaze on the world for a moment, like a meteor, and then become extinguished, rendering darkness visible. However brilliant may be the meteor, it serves not to light man in the business of the day, nor to guide the mariner on the pathless waters by night. The steady, permanent rays of sun and stars, alone do this. And that periodical religious influence which some professors exert, those coruscations of occasional zeal, that are attended with the noise and the sparks of a sky-rocket, and burst and vanish about as soon, have never produced any salutary effect on the spiritual interests of the world, more than meteors or sky-rockets furnish the permanent light and heat that promote vegetation in the kingdom of nature. All the great results in the physical world, are effected by steady, permanent influences. The sun shines steadily, day by day, for months, to mature the fruits of the

earth; the dews fall nightly through the same period, and the rain cometh oft upon it. The genial warmth pervades it, lingering day and night through the appointed season. These are the influences on which the world depends for physical blessings, silent, steady, permanent influences. The work of uprooting, desolation, and destruction, can be effected by fitful and momentary agencies. The tornado, the earthquake, and the volcano, hurry their havoc and ruin within the limits of a short period, and require but a momentary paroxysm of power to effect their disastrous results. Not so with those physical influences that bless the world. They are steady, permanent, all-pervading influences. And so must be the moral influence which Christians exert upon the world. The effects to be produced by their influence are not periodical. The instrumentality that is to enlighten, convict, convert, reclaim, and sanctify a world now lying in wickedness, must be a steady, permanent instrumentality. Christians will have to exemplify what is meant by "ALWAYS *abounding* in the work of the Lord."—The ignorance, errors, prejudices, opposition, and enmity of the world to Christ and his gospel, are not to be overcome by a fitful and transient influence. The world is to be divested of these very much as the individual in the fable is represented as being compelled to lay aside his cloak. The momentary, though furious blast of wind, first attempted, in an instant of its power, to deprive him of the mantle, but he only folded it around him more tightly, till the blast had spent its short-lived force. Yet when the sun poured upon him its *steady*, pe-

netrating, *permanent* beams, overcome by their *continuous* effect, he was obliged to throw aside the heavy garment. And it is *continuous, unabated*, persevering Christian influence, that will yet strip the world of its habiliments of rebellion against God. "The peaceable fruits of righteousness" can no more, than those of the earth, be cultivated and matured by irregular and periodical influences.—What aspect would our fields, and orchards, and vineyards present, if the sun should shine but a little while, and withdraw his light and genial warmth for a long interval, and if the dews should fall for a night or two, and then suspend their visits for weeks, and if the rain should follow the same rule, and the bland influences of spring and summer be succeeded by long intervals of the temperature of autumn and winter? could we have a golden harvest, and the closing summer crowned with fruits? And yet all these intermissions and irregularities which we have supposed in the physical elements, but too fitly represent the kind of influence which some professing Christians exert on the world. Such an influence will never cultivate and mature those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God's rich grace. It must be an influence steady, regular, and permanent as the course and light of those celestial orbs that have shone unceasingly since the morning of the creation!

III. As the lights of the world, the heavenly bodies, not only shine with a *clear, undubious, steady, permanent* light, but with a *genial and vital warmth*, so the influence which Christians

are to exert must carry with it a *fervent, life-giving spirit*. The influence of the sun on vegetable life does not consist *merely* in its light. That light is thrown as profusely and brightly over the desolations of winter as over the teeming verdure and flowers of spring, or the rich fruits of summer and autumn. All the luminaries of the heavens, as far as mere light is concerned, might shine on, clear, steady, permanent, and bright as ever, and yet, in the absence of that peculiar, mysterious, vital warmth which accompanies their rays at certain seasons, the earth would be one vast scene of wintry desolation. So the Christian's opinions may be clear, correct, enlightened, enlarged and scriptural, and his practice be outwardly blameless, negatively correct, so that no flaw or fault may attach to him, and yet his influence on the world fail to be what our text demands. It lacks the *vital, glowing warmth* of the *true Christian spirit!* His influence must combine the two elements of light and heat in their due proportions. The world will never teem with moral verdure and wave with a rich spiritual harvest under the influence of a clear, accurate, orthodox faith, and a coldly, negatively correct practice by Christians. Such a world as we have described will not burst the bands of its desolate moral winter, and break forth into the spring and summer of its spiritual renovation, under this kind of influence. The great difficulty in the way of the world's conversion does not consist merely in a darkened understanding; and the clearest light, therefore, cannot remove this difficulty. The cold *hearts* of the world must be melted down into tender, penitential submission to

the Saviour. *This* is a result that light, of itself, can never produce. To effect *this* we must have that peculiar, mysterious, vital warmth that accompanies a pure, elevated, glowing piety. No false fire can supply its place. It is the warmth diffused through the Christian's soul by daily, holy communion with God beneath the intense beams of his propitious face—the sacred fire that is kindled and kept burning by the habit of constant, importunate, secret prayer—the holy flame of supreme love to God, and the constraining love of Christ for souls fed and fanned by the communications of God's Spirit made through a diligent attendance on divine ordinances and the punctual performance of all known duties—this is the *genial, vivifying heat* that forms the great element of the Christian's influence on the world. Without it the other elements lack the very one which imparts to them all their redeeming efficacy. Let this spiritual warmth be diffused steadily, permanently, and pervadingly, like that connected with the beams of the sun, and the icy bands of earth will be dissolved, her long, dreary winter be past, and a spring lovely as that of Eden will visit her, and the wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose!

Are not Christians solemnly bound to exert such an influence as this upon the world? This introduces the *third* and last general topic of discussion proposed in this discourse, namely, the *obligations* of Christians to shine as lights in the world. On this subject I must be brief. Did time permit, I might show that Christians are under obligations to

exert such an influence on the world, *simply from the fact that it is the obvious will of God, and his direct command, that they should do so.* God's will clearly revealed, God's command explicitly given, creates the strongest obligations that can bind a rational creature. And this ought to be sufficient for Christians, who profess submission and implicit obedience to Jehovah's authority. I might also argue the obligations of Christians to exert this influence on the world from *their sense of gratitude.* "Redeemed not with corruptible things, as silver and gold," but with the amazing price of Jesus' blood—pardoned and accepted of God—filled with the joys of his salvation, adopted into his family, and made the heirs and expectants of an eternal heaven: if there be any thing that Christians can do in return for favours so infinite, so divine, gratitude would bind them to do it. They can glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which are his, by exerting this influence on the world.

I might also argue the obligations of Christians to do this from *the appeal which the gigantic miseries of an impenitent world* make to their sympathies. The ignorance, error, darkness, and moral death which pervade the world, form an awful aggregation of ills! And when you add the prospects of the world for eternity—the multitudes who, in the absence of Christian influence, must speedily be engulfed in the everlasting woes of perdition—and when you think that the only hope of remedy or removal of all these temporal and eternal woes depends, under God, on the instrumentality of Christians, the appeal to their sympathies is such as to

make them feel their obligations to be imperative and overwhelming. But I cannot dwell on these particulars, and therefore hasten to notice two considerations which show the obligations of Christians to exert such an influence as I have described on the world.

1. *All other influences that have been depended upon to reclaim and bless the world have failed.* Those have not been wanting in any age who have attempted to restore the world to virtue and happiness. *Philosophy* early tried its influence; but its profound theories were not suited to the common mind, and were never understood by the great majority of mankind. Its morality lacked divine and eternal sanctions, and therefore never extended its control over the indomitable depravity of the multitude. *The arts* have exerted their power to bless the world; and all that they have been able to do is to promote physical comfort, and furnish the facilities for the accomplishment of the temporary ends of man's present existence. All the arts of the world have never materially benefited its moral condition, though they have sometimes become subservient to a more intense play of its depravity. *Civilization* and *refinement* have tried their meliorating blandishments; but these scarcely "make the outside of the cup and platter clean." Rome, when her refinement and civilization were the wonder of the world, was pervaded with atrocious vices that brought upon her a hopeless national overthrow. *Education* has been relied on as the great means of the world's restoration to happiness; and yet what has it alone ever done for the moral welfare of the

human race? All the intellectual light which it has shed upon the world has had no more tendency to conquer its enmity, and bring it back to its allegiance and loyalty to God, than the moonlight on the northern snows has to produce vegetation! Rome's palmiest days of literature and science were her darkest period of moral corruption. "The world by wisdom knew not God." *Plans of civil government, human laws, and systems of criminal jurisprudence* have been tried, in their sway, for the benefit of the world; and, separate from religion and moral sentiment, what have they ever effected? The power of all these influences combined, had it borne steadily on the world for six thousand years, would never have broken one hard, impenitent heart—never brought it in sweet submission to God—never filled it with the joys of pardoned sin; would never have recovered to life, hope, happiness, and heaven, one immortal spirit of earth's millions. As well might we hope to draw out Leviathan from the deep with a silken thread, or bind the whirlwind with gossamer, as to control the revolt and enmity of the world against God by influences like these. No! Christian brethren, "YE are the light of the world, YE are the salt of the earth." Ye are God's witnesses; and if YOUR light be hid under a bushel, and the salt have lost its savour, darkness and moral putrefaction will reign and rage uncontrolled over the world. Your influence, under God, is the *last resort* of a dying world. All other influences have utterly failed. *Yours* is the world's last hope, and God's appointed instrumentality for its redemption. If you withhold this,

a moral darkness more appalling than the fancied darkness of Byron's dream must settle on the world! Blot out sun, moon, and stars, and could any artificial fires lighted on this globe supply their place? Ye are to shine as *these celestial* lights in the world; and if you do not, the moral canopy of earth will remain hung in a rayless gloom, the fit and fearful emblem and prelude of that "blackness of darkness" to which its myriads of souls must be consigned for ever! Would that I could write it on your hearts "as with a pen of iron or the point of a diamond," that *yours* is the only influence, under God, that will ever redeem and bless this bleeding, dying world. Oh, what infinite responsibility rests upon Christians! How tender, sacred, awful, are their obligations to exert the right kind of influence on this apostate globe! It is heaven's last great expedient—earth's only hope for salvation!

2. The only other consideration which I shall adduce to show the obligations of Christians to exert such an influence on the world is, that *this is one principal design of God in detaining them on earth after their conversion*. When we contemplate the principles of a regenerated soul—its deadness to the world—its hatred of sin—its love of holiness—its desire for communion with God—its taste for the purity, and its hopes and longings for the bliss of heaven, and then look at the whole course of this present evil world, we can see that this is not a congenial place for the Christian. All the elements of the world are unfriendly to him. Every thing seems to be armed with weapons to be wielded against the new spiritual life on which he has en-

tered. Insidious allurements, adroit temptations, and complicated snares are laid thickly on every step of his pathway. Earth and hell lie in ambuscade there, and assault him on his pilgrimage. Now, when we think of the everlasting love of the Father, and the dying love and mediatorial sympathy of the Saviour for his people, we cannot for a moment suppose that God would detain them here on earth so long, if his main and only design in their conversion was to take them to heaven. For aught we know, the Holy Spirit might complete the sanctification of every soul that is converted as speedily as it did that of the thief on the cross. Why, then, should a benevolent God, and a compassionate, sympathizing Saviour, keep the Christian so long on earth, in contact with the tumultuating elements of its depravity? Why not wing his spirit at once for its upward and returnless flight from the storm and turmoil of the world? Must not God have the wisest and best reasons—must he not have some grand design in detaining his own beloved people in circumstances like these so long away from the deep repose and unvexed felicity of heaven? And what is this great design that influences God to leave his own dear children so long amidst the conflicts and sorrows of this mortal scene? Let the blessed Redeemer answer:—"I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should *remain!*" Yes, this fruit is of more importance to this perishing world than the immediate and perfected bliss of heaven is to Christians. God detains them from that bliss that they may bring forth this fruit, and that it

may remain. It is the only provision for that tremendous spiritual famine under which the world is pining away, and is threatened with eternal death! Could the world be defended from the ravages and ruin of the armies of its spiritual wants *without* the influence of Christians, then would all the good soldiers of Jesus Christ be discharged from the war, return to their homes in heaven, unbind the helmet, wipe the sweat from their brow, and hang their shields in the halls of glory! But such is not the design of God when they enlist under the banner of the cross. They are to endure hardness in the toils of the camp here. God has marshalled them, by his sovereign grace, as *the select life-guard* of the world; and under their oath to the great Captain of salvation, they are to defend it faithfully from all the hosts that make war on its spiritual interests. Can they, *dare* they ever desert their post, till their work and their warfare shall have been accomplished? Will they thwart the very design of God in detaining them here after their conversion? This is the main purpose of God in your stay here on earth! Are you not solemnly bound to fulfil it? Are you not under imperious, infinite obligations to fall in with the great end that God has had in view by keeping you in this world, instead of taking you directly to heaven? Oh, acknowledge, *feel* these obligations. Never dare break one tie by which the purpose of God has connected your influence with the redemption of this apostate globe. Tax all your energies for the fulfilment of his glorious design, and bring upon this lost, bleeding, sinking world that Christian influence by which God yet means to flood

earth with light, and eternity with the joys of redeemed millions.

My dear hearers, I leave it with your consciences, as I do with my own, to decide how far the influence which we have been exerting on the world has been of the kind described in this discourse. Where is our light?—in the candlestick or under a bushel? Into what parts of our families, our circles of friends and acquaintances, has the genial, vital warmth of our piety penetrated, and been felt as a means of melting stubborn hearts and bringing them to penitential submission? Have our opinions and practice been just what God and conscience required, and a shrewd world judged to be consistent? Have we shone as lights—as the heavenly bodies, with beams clear, steady, bright, permanent, irradiating our whole sphere? Has our Christian influence been such as to meet the dire spiritual wants of the world around us? Has that world been enlightened, transformed, *vivified* by it?—and has God smiled and blest us with the beams of his countenance on our own souls, for the fidelity and success with which we have performed the duty enjoined in the text? These are solemn questions for conscience to decide in Jehovah's presence to-day. I hope they will not be unheeded, nor left for an hour unanswered by either speaker or hearers.

On the kind of Christian influence now described, more than on any other human instrumentality, depends the prevalence of revivals of religion, and the success and progress of the gospel in the world. When Christians universally awake and arise from the dead, and receive light from their communion

with Christ, and reflect it warm from "the Sun of Righteousness" on a dying world, then shall "the day-spring" of its deliverance from error and crime visit it, and the "day-star" that heralds the glories of its millennial morning shine with cheering rays on the eyes of expectant nations.

SERMON V.

“FOR THE SON OF MAN is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—LUKE XIX. 10.

THE term “lost,” when only employed in its literal sense, is one of mournful significancy. The individual, who in a night of clouds, and rayless gloom, has missed his way, and is wandering, lost from his cheerful hearth and familiar home, excites in his behalf a strong and peculiar sympathy. But the scriptural representation of the sinner’s condition in reference to God, as the Father of his spirit, and heaven as his home, makes a more resistless appeal to our benevolent commiseration. Sin has reared dark mountains around, and spread out the canopy of a moonless, starless, moral night, over the immortal spirit, beneath and among which it gropes its way, not knowing whither it goeth. It is man’s imperishable part that is lost, the interests of his spiritual being that are ruined; his *soul*, lost, is wandering away from its happy home in the skies—exiled from the bosom of its Father, an outcast from the endearments and the joys of God’s great family on earth, and in heaven. We may remark, however, that being lost, does not always imply that the person is *innocently and involuntarily* lost. Usage sanctions the application of this term to the conduct and condition of the youth, who has *voluntarily and*

wickedly overleaped the boundaries of parental restraint, and broken away from the tenderness of parental love, and plunged deeply into the dissipations of ungodly companionship. We say he is lost to his family, to society, to every noble and elevated feeling. And he *is* lost, for he does nothing that indicates that *he* belongs to, and has his home with that lovely family, from which he is wandering; nor does he share in the virtuous joys of their domestic circle; nor do his parents treat him, nor *dare* they treat him as a son. He has intervals of broken reflection himself, when the promptings of the remains of his earlier and better feelings remind him that he is lost. He knows it, and sometimes for a moment seems inclined to relent and return, but goes on his way wandering still. It is in this sense, that God regards and declares an impenitent world as *lost*.

That sinners are thus lost, is the doctrine of the text, and may be proved by the following considerations:

I. *The pursuits or doings of sinners evince that they are lost.* In all their diversified pursuits, in the play of their ceaseless activity, there is no reference to the service of God. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God." There is no serious attention given to the claims of God, no serious inquiry after God, no upward aim in any of the sinner's actions tending to heaven, no real aspirations after a knowledge of God, no ardent hopes of a return to the home of the soul, no voluntary effort to cease from wandering. That he should quit his rebellion, submit to God, repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and consecrate

himself without reserve, to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of God blameless, never really enters his mind. Amidst all the multitude of his thoughts within him, and all the outward plans and pursuits of his life, there is no great governing purpose, to regard God as his righteous sovereign. He follows his own depraved inclinations, and has no higher aim than to gratify his own supreme selfishness. The law of God, the will of God, the glory of God, and the good of his fellow men, never claim his serious notice, as the great motives which should control his conduct. Were you to judge merely from an analysis of his actions, you would scarcely suspect that he had *a soul*, or if he had, that it held any serious relations to God, or to the high and awful destinies of immortality. His desires, plans, purposes, pursuits, hopes, wishes, and unwearied efforts, are all circumscribed by earth, and confined within the uncertain period of the present life. If, then, *earth* be the true home and portion of the undying soul, man is not lost, the sinner is *at home*. But if there be any higher sphere of existence, any God but the God of this world, any blest realm beyond the confines of this little globe, attainable and to be sought as man's final rest, and ulterior destination, then all the pursuits of the sinner, the entire direction and application of his activities prove that he is *lost*, lost to God, to holiness, to hope and to heaven!

II. The sinner's *own restlessness and present dissatisfaction* premonish him, that he is lost. In the earlier periods of life, when the heart unblighted by disappointment, is full of sanguine hope, and all the great objects of human aspiration lie yet before

him, in the exaggerated attractions of eager and confident anticipation, the sinner feels comparatively satisfied with himself, and with his present circumstances. He has so many castles built in air, that they seem to him as a "city of habitation." The momentary restlessness and dissatisfaction which he may occasionally experience, are at once quieted by the onward boundings of young elastic hope, and the grasp of eager expectation on the future. But as one, and another, and yet another of the great plans of life are accomplished, as object after object of hope and anticipation are realized, or bitter disappointment proclaims them beyond his reach for ever, when the tide of life is turned, and he has to dwell in memory on what he *has* done, and been, rather than in hope of what he yet expects to be, and to do, the case is quite different. Then he has intervals of intolerable restlessness, when he is goaded with a vague craving after some unknown good. He realizes then, that the world has held out a promise to the ear, that it has broken to the heart, that it has utterly failed to redeem the great pledge which it gave to his ardent youthful hopes. His expectations have cruelly mocked him. The rest, the finished satisfaction, which he once confidently believed awaited him, when he should have compassed certain ends, he has not attained. He even begins to indulge the unwelcome suspicion that there is an intrinsic emptiness in the mere things of earth, rendering it impossible that they should ever fully satisfy the cravings of his nature! He grows dissatisfied with himself, with his attainments, with his present circumstances. Could he accomplish all that his heart

has ever desired or purposed, yet the thoughts of the brevity, the uncertainty of life, and the absolute certainty of death, sooner or later as the destroyer of his great possessions and enjoyments, could not be barred from his mind, by the gates and walls of a palace, nor bribed away by the wealth of the world. After all the accumulations of a most successful career, he begins to feel that his *soul* has really no substantial, satisfactory, enduring portion. Its desires are not filled, the aspirations of its active deathless powers after a position of secure repose, and high enjoyment, are not met and gratified. It has a vague, yet tantalizing conviction, that notwithstanding all it has done, and all it has attained, it is still in exile, without a home and a rest suited to its immortal nature. And though this conviction may be banished, and this restlessness occasionally broken up by plunging more deeply into the business or guilty pleasures of the world, yet they recur, as returning birds of ill omen, more and more frequently, as his experience of the unsatisfying nature of temporal good becomes more ripened and confirmed. Now, dear hearers, would this be the case, were the sinner in all respects, in the condition in which God creates and places the rational subjects of his government? Has he not wandered from the true position of an accountable immortal creature? Is he not out of the way? As he advances on his path, you observe, that instead of feeling the proximity and attractions of home with all its nameless endearments, he becomes more and more restless and dissatisfied, hunted and harassed with a sense of exile, ever increasing as time rolls on. Is not this the mark of being lost? Would the

sinner feel thus, had he "returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls," and were he led by him "into the green pastures, and by the quiet waters" of salvation? No, my impenitent hearer, that very restlessness and dissatisfaction, which no effort of yours can prevent, are God's messengers stationed in the constitution of your nature to premonish you that *you are lost!*

III. *God's dealings with them, in the present world*, prove that unrenewed sinners are lost. On this point, the divine administration over men for ages past, has been full of instruction. God's *acts* are unequivocal evidence, how he regards those who are the subjects of them. As a matter of indisputable fact, then, how has God treated sinners in the present world? Has he shaped the course of his dealings with them, as a class of his rational creatures, who are *safe at home, unexiled, unalienated from their God?* In the acts of God towards them, have sinners been practically and by implication regarded as living loyally in his presence, resting by faith and love in the bosom of his infinite benevolence, dwelling at ease beneath the shadow of the Almighty, in no danger of mistaking the way to true happiness here, and to the heaven of the holy hereafter? No, my dear hearers, the history of God's administration over the world teaches a far different lesson. In the long train of judgments that have scourged, and at times, well nigh extinguished, our sinning race, we behold a great system of means appealing powerfully to the fears of man, to induce him to turn from his evil ways, cease his wanderings, and seek safety in the favour of God. These judgments contain les-

sons of impressive warning to *wanderers*, to "those that are *out of the way*," that have *strayed from the path* of his commandments. The acts of God's retributive providence, stand out along the course of time, as beacons to tell of those eternal billows of wrath, that await the lost in their final shipwreck in eternity. So the frowns and chastisements visited on individuals, speak of God's controversy with them for what? for being in the path of safety now, and urging their way onward to consummated redemption in heaven? God forbid; but for being *out of the path of life*, and for wilfully wandering in the broad road to perdition, to the consummated woes of *the lost* in hell! These visitations are God's stern messengers to them, warning them to *turn* from the error of their way, and be saved. And what is implied in every revelation which God has made to man since that intimation to the first pair in Eden after the fall, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head? What necessity would call for repeated interpositions of God, to reveal his counsel and will to a class of rational beings, who were safe in the paths of rectitude, walking in the very light of his countenance, and led and controlled by supreme love to him? In every supernatural communication from heaven to earth, we have evidence that God regards men as in need of *light*, but in need of it for what? manifestly to enable them to *find* a way in which, by nature, they are *not* walking. Amongst the blessings which God only can bestow, the Psalmist enumerates the following: "*Thou wilt show me the path of life.*" The entire revelation of God to man every where assumes that he is *lost*, that he

needs light and controlling influences from above to bring him back into the way that leads to heaven, the home of the soul.

IV. *The direct declarations of Scripture and the provisions of the gospel*, prove that impenitent men are lost. The oracles of God utter a language and bear a testimony on this point, whose pertinence and weight it would seem impossible to overlook. "All we like sheep have gone astray." "I have gone astray like a lost sheep." "But go rather to the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel." I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "Ye that were sometime *afar off*, hath he brought nigh." "Lo, they that are *far from* thee shall perish." "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost*." And what gives so inimitable a pathos to the parables of the lost sheep, the ten pieces of silver, and the divine tragedy of the Prodigal Son? The great master-thought designed to be excited by these representations is obviously *the lost* condition of the sinner, requiring the interposition of infinite mercy to recover and save him. What gives significancy to the character and offices of Jesus Christ as a Saviour? Why "the Son of man came *to seek and to save that which was lost*." He became incarnate, took part with his brethren in flesh and blood, that "he might have compassion on the ignorant, and them that *are out of the way*." Hence he is represented as a Shepherd whose peculiar function it is *to seek* those that *are lost*, and to guard the flock from straying, and lead them to a proper destination. He is represented as a prophet, the great prophet like unto Moses, who was to be raised up to teach

the truth of God fully and without a figure, and to make known the way of eternal life, without shadows or symbols. Yea, he is himself emphatically styled "*the way.*" Now why his union with our nature, and why these peculiar offices, were it not a fact that sinners are *lost*? This fact receives a most impressive testimony to its truth from *the august sacrifice* of the Son of God. What means that deep humiliation, that emptying himself of the uncreated glories of his divinity which marked the Saviour's assumption of our nature, and his entrance into our world? What means the poverty of his birth and life, denied as he was from his first breath a place whereon to lay his head? What mean the unrelenting and rancorous persecutions of kings and rulers, priests, scribes and elders, and the contradiction of sinners against himself, which he endured through life? Why was he a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs, his countenance more marred than any man's? What means the aggravated and heinous treachery of Judas that betrayed him into the hands of sinners? What mean the sorrows of Gethsemane, the prayers and tears, the gloom and groans, the great sweat of agony, and the angel sympathies of that memorable night in the garden? What mean the judicial mockery, the perjury of suborned witnesses, the scoffs and scourging, the spitting upon and buffeting of Pilate's Hall and Herod's audience chamber, and the final sentence of condemnation so palpably and monstrously unjust, that the pagan judge himself strove to wash his hands of its deep and damning guilt? Look at the scourged and bleeding Lamb of God, meek and innocent, bearing

his cross on the way to Calvary! "There they crucified him." There he voluntarily makes his soul an offering to God through the eternal Spirit for the sins of the world! What mean those bodily tortures? that deeper, keener anguish of spirit imprinted on his every feature, as he exclaims, "Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani!!" What means that darkness which has so suddenly veiled all the shining hosts of heaven in sackcloth and shrouded earth in unwonted gloom? Hark! What means that loud cry—"It is finished?" and the Son of God gives up the ghost! What means the shock that nature to her centre feels—that shakes the world, and rends the rocks, and cleaves the tombs, and wakes the dead? O! this is the utterance, this the sublime eloquence in which God proclaims that sinners are **LOST!!** The blood of Christ shed amidst all those tragic wonders of the crucifixion is the mighty expiation made to *save* them!! Nothing less than this would have been an adequate remedy for their ruin. Would such an atonement ever have been made, such attractions ever have centred in the cross to draw all men to the Saviour, had they not been "wretched wanderers lost?" What need we farther witness on this point? Yet *the ministration of the Holy Spirit* bears additional testimony to this melancholy truth. Why are *its* unseen visits and almighty energies necessary to the soul's conversion? Were sinners not absolutely lost, why would it be requisite that God, the Holy Ghost, should become their counsellor and guide? Had they not strayed hopelessly from their God, why would the illuminations, the new-creating and irresistible energies of his Spirit, be indispensably

necessary to bring the wanderers home? In every visit then of this divine Messenger to the soul of man, God is bearing a silent but most impressive testimony to the truth, that the sinner *is lost*, in himself, *hopelessly* LOST!

V. *The convictions of the awakened sinner* testify that men, in their natural state, are lost. When under the convicting influences of the Holy Spirit, the estimate which man has of his real condition in the sight of God is more likely to approach the truth than at any other time. To aid him in forming a correct opinion of his moral character and condition in this case, he has the illuminating power and the successful teachings of the Spirit of truth itself; that divine agent whose peculiar function it is to "convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come." Now, what is the predominant agitating thought in the mind of the merely awakened sinner? True, he feels his *guilt* as a rebel against God. His multiplied and heinous sins arise in spectral train, and terrify his soul. The fangs of remorse fasten in his conscience; he condemns himself, and is cut to the heart with a sense of ill desert. But when well nigh goaded to agony under an apprehension of the enormity of his guilt, there arises another feeling more strangely sad, more insupportably depressing—the feeling that he is *lost*. No child, severed from home, and straying alone in a pathless wood by night, ever wept a tear or uttered a moan of desertion and solitude comparable to those of the truly awakened and convicted sinner. Oh, what an oppressive *loneliness* comes over his soul! He hears not, or heeds not if he hear, the din of this world's

mirth and business. He becomes silent and sadly thoughtful. To him now his exile from God has become a living, present, *felt reality!* The idea of a wretched prodigal in a far country commends itself to him now with a new and mournful significancy, as peculiarly and precisely descriptive of his own convictions and feelings in reference to his present spiritual state. How *friendless* and *forlorn* does he feel himself to be! Wandering about he knows not whither—homeless and shelterless, outcast and solitary, his heart dies within him. Lost to his Father in heaven—lost to the blessed Saviour and Shepherd of souls—lost to hope—lost to the present joys of salvation—lost to holiness—lost to the anticipated home of all the righteous, when their pilgrimage shall have ended—lost, *lost, lost*, the perpetual, saddening sound that rings in his ears—the one undying thought that burns his bosom to the core, and, by its maddening impulse, drives him to the verge of deep despair! It is the predominance and pungency of this feeling which is mainly instrumental in bringing the awakened sinner to receive and appreciate Jesus Christ as a SAVIOUR. Now, what are we compelled to infer from the fact that such is the prominent and distressing conviction of the awakened sinner respecting his state, in the honest hours of his anxiety about his soul? His tears, his sighs, his solitary anguish, his sense of deep desertion—of homeless exile—of returnless distance from God, and severance from the sympathies and fellowship of all the holy—these constitute a consenting utterance on this point from every awakened sinner since Abel, “deep calling unto deep,” in their convictions, across

the chasm of ages, and warning the impenitent of every generation that *they are* LOST!

VI. LASTLY.—*The consciences of wicked men in the dying hour* testify that they are lost.

The testimony of conscience, I am aware, cannot always be taken without qualification. It is capable, in certain circumstances, of being so bribed and perverted as to bear false witness. But this is generally effected by the pleas of self-interest and sinful indulgence. It is while the man is in health, and in hot pursuit of worldly gain or guilty pleasures, that conscience can be quieted by opiates, or suborned by a flattering sophistry to testify falsely. When men find that, willing or unwilling, they must lay them down to die, and quit the world, then the temptations to bribe and pervert conscience lose their power. Now, what testimony, articulate or inarticulate, do the consciences of most wicked men bear in the honest dying hour? To the impenitent, unreconciled soul, what is it that shrouds that hour in a darkness so deep and dismaying? What knits that sinner's brow in the severity of more than mortal anguish? What causes those eyes to *look* the unutterable agonies of the soul within? What has drawn on that pallid countenance the lines of a wild, unearthly surprise and solicitude, which tell of a failing heart and of fleeing hope? Why is that lip occasionally curved in maddened determination, as though the rebel soul were, by anticipation, marshalling its powers of enmity and resistance to meet the shock of commencing an eternal war with its God? Why is there no celestial ray to relieve the unbroken gloom of that face—to smile on the sinking features,

and to circle the wan cheek of death with the rainbow of immortal hope and promise, wreathed even on its sweat and its tears? Are all these tragic phenomena the *necessary* attendants upon the mere physical event of death itself? Must all these sable and sad insignia of the king of terrors be displayed as symbols to tell what it costs a *safe, happy* soul to quit the body and pass into a brighter, better scene of being? Ah, no! These all become mournfully significant of something quite different in the soul's last conflict, when we listen to the testimony of the dying sinner's conscience. That testimony is simple, brief, direct, and *terribly sublime!* "*I am lost!—my soul, my immortal soul, IS ETERNALLY LOST!*" *This* is the giant thought read from every line of agony in the dying countenance, and spoken with a hundred tongues in every death-groan; this the one resistless conviction that leads the way in all the recoilings of horror and wild dismay of dissolution, and that brings on the soul, before it quite forsakes its clay, the tremendous foretaste of the pains of hell, and the despair of a ruined eternity! In every impenitent death-scene, then, since Cain's, conscience, in all the overwhelming eloquence of that last, honest, awful hour, has borne its unequivocal evidence to the fact that the sinner *is lost*. This is its last echo in the soul as it quits the world, and goes to have the truth confirmed in the final sentence of God's tribunal!

If such be the irrefragable proof that the impenitent sinner is lost, then we infer, *in the first place, that Christians ought to exert themselves most strenuously for his salvation.* My dear Chris-

tian friends, how is it that our "knees are feeble and our hands hang down" in our efforts to save the lost soul? Had you the same evidence that one of your own children, or one of your neighbour's children, were literally lost, as you have that your own children and others around you are *spiritually* lost, oh, would it be possible for you to be so listless and inactive? And yet you profess to believe that all the interests of the present life that might be perilled by an individual being literally lost, are but as the mere dust of the balance, when weighed against those eternal interests of the soul that are in jeopardy every hour till the lost sinner is found by the Saviour. Recapitulate here, in the close of this subject, the evidence which gives so absolute a certainty that the impenitent sinner is lost. Contemplate his whole course through life. Do not his *actions* proclaim more emphatically than words, that he *is lost*? Think of his intervals of restlessness and dissatisfaction with himself, when his mind blindly beats against the barriers of his limited earthly portion, in search of something beyond. Do not these struggles of the immortal principle within him tell both you and him that he is lost? Review the dealings of a holy God with him, and hear the voice of retributive justice, in flood and fire, sword and pestilence, blighting and mildew, famine, desolation, and destruction, warning the sinner that he is lost, and appealing to your sympathies in his behalf! Read the direct declarations of scripture on this subject, and bow reverently to these awful truths of God's oracles. Look at all the provisions of the gospel, and see how the assumption of the sinner's lost estate

runs throughout, and gives character to the whole remedial scheme. Every aspect and office of the incarnate Redeemer silently points to the sinner as lost. Hear that loss proclaimed in the groans of Gethsemane—in the tortures and cries of Calvary—echoed at the tomb of Joseph, and reiterated in the ascent from Olivet, and let your heart begin to yearn and melt over the sinner! Hear the testimony of the deep and agitating convictions of all awakened sinners, and call to mind the wormwood and the gall which yourselves once tasted, in order that you may feel the certainty, the fearful reality, of the sinner's lost condition. Go to the death-bed of all the wicked, and listen to the united testimony of their consciences, shrieking out, in the despairing agony of dissolution, the awful truth that the sinner is lost. Then think of the *nature* of this loss. It is the *soul* that is lost; lost to holiness, hope, heaven, God, and a blessed eternity! The soul of your brother—your wife or husband—your sons and daughters, are thus lost! Then look up to Christ the Saviour, on his throne in heaven, and behold the amazing sympathy there that yearns over the lost soul, that woos and entreats it to be reconciled to God, and then tell me, Christian, what means *our* apathy on this subject? Oh, how awfully criminal our indolence! Why are not our hearts wrung with agony, and our arms nerved with the strength of Christ, for their rescue? Why have we not compassion on some, pulling them out of the fire? From our own families, and from multitudes around us, the appalling cry comes over our souls to-day—lost, *lost*, LOST! O God! awaken thy people to weep, and pray, and labour with their might for the salvation of the lost.

FINALLY.—My dear, impenitent hearers, as your lost condition has been so satisfactorily proven to you this day, how can I, in view of it, dismiss you from the sanctuary again without a word of tender expostulation, and a tear of unaffected sorrow and sympathy. I am bound, by my high commission as God's minister, to warn you faithfully that you are lost; or, neglecting to do so, if the sword of divine justice falls on you, I shall be responsible for the blood of your souls thus shed. But, irrespective of this, there is something in the very thought that *you ARE lost now* which overwhelms my heart with anguish. The dear youth of my flock *lost!* No Father in heaven to shelter them in his bosom amidst the storms of earth—no Saviour to guide their feet in the path of life—no Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Sanctifier, to be with them amidst the perils and pollutions of the world—no family of angels to surround their dying pillows—no home for their precious souls in that boundless hereafter to which they hasten! The impenitent of every age here before me *LOST*—straying on the dark mountains of sin to-day, their feet in slippery places, and doomed to slide in due time, and they to fall into an eternal perdition! Oh, can it be indeed so! How hard to realize it!—lost, lost, *absolutely lost* now, *TO-DAY!* Oh, ye wanderers, blame not the tear that starts over your forlorn condition! What can I do for you? My *lost* hearers, oh, what can I do for you? You are out of the way, straying from your God, and hastening to the deep and dark chambers of eternal death! What sacrifice would I not cheerfully make to reclaim you. I am willing “to spend

and be spent for you"—to devote my sorrowful days and wearisome nights for your benefit—to preach, and weep, and pray for you, amidst all "the pains and ills that flesh is heir to." Will you hear me? Oh, will you just give me your serious, undivided attention while I repeat to you the blessed announcement of the text?—"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Sinner, He is here seeking for you in the sanctuary to-day. He speaks to you in that silent assent which your own conscience now gives to the truths presented in this discourse. His finger has touched your heart in that tender emotion which you now feel, as you reflect on your lost condition, and on his infinite condescension in coming to seek and to save you. Will you yield to him now? Will you permit him to take you by the hand to-day, and lead you back from all your wanderings to himself? He is *the way*, the truth, and the life; and the experience of all the finally lost through eternity will amply attest the tremendous truth,—“Lo, all they that are far from Thee shall perish!”

SERMON VI.

“And behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”—LUKE ix. 30, 31.

IN the verses immediately preceding the text, we have the record of the only aspect of visible splendour or personal glory which the Lord Jesus Christ ever assumed during his ministry on earth. The circumstances in which he exhibited this specimen of the celestial grandeur of his divinity were very peculiar and of a kind quite confounding to human calculation. It was not in the royal city, the centre of curiosity and intelligence, amidst the nobles of the nation, the men of science and the dignitaries of the church that the Son of God shone for a season in the native resplendency of his divine nature. It was on the top of a solitary mountain with three humble followers, Peter and John and James, as the only spectators. It was not when working some great and striking miracle, and thus asserting his lordship over the laws of nature, and his claims to an equality with God, the Father and Creator. It was in the humble posture of a suppliant. “As he *prayed*, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening:” (the original is,) “was brilliant and dazzling as lightning.” Such was the amazing change that had sud-

denly passed on the personal appearance of the Saviour, and such the oppressive splendour of that bright cloud, that atmosphere of glory, which clad the mountain top, and closed around the little group, that they fell on their faces so bewildered with surprise, fear, and joy, all blended, that they knew not where they were, nor what they said. What added greatly to the wonder and awe inspired by this scene, was the mysterious, yet veritable apparition of two individuals from beyond the curtained boundaries of the present life—from the shadowy realms of those long dead! These two individuals came on this occasion, not in those misty forms and pale habiliments with which mortal imagination invests them, but as redeemed and perfected spirits in celestial costume—in the resplendent robes of their glory. Mankind have always entertained the idle wish, or the wanton curiosity to witness some direct and magnificent manifestation of the Deity, and to see or know, from personal observation, something of departed spirits. Now, here is a divinely authenticated case, combining both these coveted objects of knowledge. But sinful curiosity is no better satisfied, than had this instance never occurred. Here is “the brightness of the Father’s glory and *the express image of his person,*” on a mountain of this world, in the radiance of his divinity, and his own word, in another place, assuring us that “he that hath seen ME hath seen *the Father.*” Will not this suffice? No! this is not the place, nor this the manner, in which mere idle inquisitiveness wishes to be gratified, by witnessing a sensible manifestation of God. The Lord Jesus had *too serious*

an aim in his transfiguration, to satisfy this vain wish, it was to establish his claims as the Messiah, "the Christ of God," and thus bring on man the obligation to believe in and submit to Him, and the responsibility of refusing Him at the peril of eternal perdition. The carnal heart covets no display of the Godhead, however grand and imposing in itself, if it associates considerations like these.

But again; here are Moses and Elias, not recalled like Lazarus, or the son of the widow of Nain, so soon after death, as to leave room for skepticism to doubt whether their souls had really passed into "the spirit land." No; the one had been dead about fifteen hundred, the other about nine hundred years. They are now, each in his appropriate and recognisable identity, back on earth again. Will not this suffice as an instance of real return from the veiled and eternal state of the deceased? No; idle curiosity is grievously disappointed in this case, because these two made no marvellous disclosures respecting *the mode of existence*, and *the strange condition* and *employments* of departed spirits. This is the more tantalizing to such curiosity, from the fact that the record states that these two returned spirits were not silent on this occasion. They did speak, and perhaps in mortal language too.— There was a theme, on which they and the Son of God, amidst all the glories of the scene, mutually conversed, and on which they dwelt with a thrilling, a profound interest. But what mighty topic was befitting an hour like this, and sufficiently grand and commanding for an interchange of thought between a group of minds the most exalted that ever

have met, or ever will meet, in the world's history. "They spake of *the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem!*" How it mocks the calculations of worldly minds, and vexes the spirit of vain speculation, on the future condition of disembodied souls, to be informed that these two distinguished men, Moses and Elias, when they returned to earth, after having been so long dead, should have made the death of Christ the only and all-absorbing subject of their conversation. And yet, this very topic, doubtless, had a depth and intensity of interest, sufficient to justify the Son of God in his transfiguration, and these two glorified spirits in their miraculous return to earth, in bestowing on it exclusively, the conversation of their splendid interview on the mount. I propose, then, in the subsequent remarks, to suggest some considerations connected with the death of Christ, which we may suppose, were deeply interesting as subjects of conversation to Moses and Elijah, and the Saviour himself, on the mount of transfiguration.

I. The decease which Christ should accomplish at Jerusalem, was to be *the consummation of that system of the law and the prophets, in which Moses and Elijah had felt so deep an interest during life, and in the establishment and administration of which they both had borne so distinguished a part.* The toils of the one, as the divinely commissioned legislator of Israel, and of the other, as the favoured prophet of the Lord to that people, enter largely into the sum of that human instrumentality, by which God founded and forwarded the first dispensation under which his great remedial

scheme for man was developed to the world. The deep interest which these two holy men felt in the progress and success of the old dispensation, viewed as the commencement of God's stupendous plan of mercy, and as introductory to the advent of the Messiah, and the more glorious ministration of the gospel, may be judged of by the labours and self-denials, the sacrifices and sufferings that fill the history of their long and anxious lives. With an enlargement of mind which "the inspirations of the Almighty" only could give, they saw, even through all the darkness of that dispensation, its infinite importance to this lost and guilty world, as an essential preliminary to the completed developments of the gospel in these last times. No less than the gospel, it was *God's* plan, the wisest and best that could be formed and carried forward for the recovery and moral discipline of men in the then existing state of the world. It was, at the time, the only hope of our fallen race. With its types, and shadows, and ceremonies, it constituted a symbolical alphabet, suited to moral infancy, by which God was teaching those great and vital truths that are now presented, clearly and without a figure, in the New Testament.

While they were yet on earth, both Moses and Elijah saw the day of Christ afar off—they had a glimpse of the "Star that should come out of Jacob," twinkling in the horizon of the far distant future. They saw, too, that all the peculiarities of the old economy, pointed to the Lord Jesus as the Messiah promised, and to come—that this gave it its entire significancy as a divine dispensation, and that ulti-

mately, nothing could rescue it from the charge of awful imposture, but the actual appearance of just such a Messiah as Jesus Christ, who should sustain such a character, and suffer, and die, just as he was now about to do at Jerusalem. Is it matter of wonder, then, that during their lives, Moses and Elijah should have felt a deep and absorbing interest in this system of the law and the prophets? But they had been long parted from this world, and resident in a state of glory. Yet our text indicates, that their sympathies and holy solicitude were still identified with this scheme, that they watched its progress, and awaited with eager expectancy its consummation. It embodied the interests and the hopes of that race with whom they once mingled in these terrestrial scenes, and over whom they still yearned in the celestial charity of "the spirits of just men made perfect." And now, they had returned from glory to a spot of earth which one of them had seen from the top of Pisgah, and the other had trodden over in the execution of his prophetic office, and here they meet the Messiah in the glory of his transfiguration, just about to accomplish a decease at Jerusalem, which would consummate that great system of the law and the prophets, which had engrossed their toils and cares in time, their sympathies and benevolent expectations in eternity. What a meeting was this!—the only one ever held on earth in which the redeemed in heaven were represented by some of their own number "appearing in *glory!*" O! with what rapture did these exalted spirits from above gaze on the eternal Son of God! With what eloquence divine did they talk with

Him, and He with them, of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, of its mighty effect as the closing event of that ancient dispensation, for whose advancement they had lived, in whose partial light they had died in faith and holy hope, and whose completion they had desired for ages in heaven!

II. A second consideration associated with the death of Christ, which we may suppose was full of interest to these two glorified spirits, was *the stupendous influence yet to be exerted by that event on the moral condition of this world which they once inhabited.*

It does no violence to reason or revelation, to assume that Moses and Elijah, though translated to the spheres, and possessing the perfected and impartial benevolence of the spirits of just men in glory, yet felt a peculiar and *home-like* interest in every thing that had a direct bearing on the spiritual renovation of that world from which they had themselves been redeemed. Its present woes, and its prospective blessings, under the future influence of that decease which should soon be accomplished at Jerusalem, none of the living could estimate as could these two glorified minds. The long ages which Moses and Elijah had spent in the light and augmenting intelligence of heaven, must have greatly enhanced their knowledge of the number and magnitude of those tremendous evils which sin has introduced into the world, and tended to swell the holy sympathies of their hearts in its behalf. It is the world where they once dwelt, *the home* of their mortality, inhabited still by a race with whom they

feel themselves connected by the links of a former existence, and their miraculous return now to meet, on one of its mountains, its mighty Redeemer, brings back the tender and solemn remembrances of ages gone by, and deepens their interest in its moral destinies. But, O! how differently do they now look on the desolations which sin hath wrought on this earth, from what they did when dwellers here in tenements of clay, and before their mortal had put on immortality! If, in the present life, the reviving influence of God's Spirit on the hearts of his people brings them to contemplate the ruin and miseries of their impenitent fellow-men with an enlargement of view, and a depth of feeling so much beyond the measure of their ordinary experience, what, in the case of Moses and Elijah, must have been the effect of the expanding light of heaven for ages? How gross to *their* eye, must have seemed that darkness which covered the people—how deep and dreadful its folds contrasted with the cloudless scene, the robes of light, and glittering crowns, and all the bright characteristics of their existence in the realms of the blest. In their comprehensive view, what dire realities were the pollutions and degradations of this world lying in wickedness, contrasted with the purity and elevation to which they had so long been accustomed in the world of happy spirits! How numerous, varied, and powerful, the prejudices of men against the gospel, contrasted with the estimate which they had been accustomed to see it receive from the hosts of heaven, and the holy delight and joyful eagerness with which angels desired to look into its mysteries of glory to God, and blessed-

ness to the universe. How base and baleful the various forms of error and superstition, contrasted with those lofty and intuitive convictions of truth, and that intelligent, spiritual worship, with which they and their celestial associates of all orders had been long familiar! How fortified and gigantic the enmity of the human heart against God, contrasted with that sweetly subdued spirit of supreme love that they had witnessed veiling the faces of cherubim, casting crowns of glory at Emanuel's feet, and winging every mind of heaven's myriads for a swift and implicit obedience to Jehovah's will! From this appalling view of the world in which they once dwelt, Moses and Elijah now turn their thoughts, and begin to converse with the transfigured Saviour, respecting the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Why? because they see that that event will yet exert an influence which shall completely change the moral aspect of our world. During their own life-time, each of them was aware that it was this great event, indicated by sacrifices, and beheld afar off by faith, which had exerted all the redeeming influence that the world then, or from the beginning, had ever experienced. And now, they behold and actually converse with the long promised Messiah respecting this august sacrifice of himself, just on the eve of being offered! They now see that it will soon be proclaimed as a fact that Christ *has* died and risen again the third day, and that this simple announcement will be accompanied by so glorious a "ministration of the Spirit," that the shadows of the dispensation in which they laboured, will suddenly flee away, and the church

of God, putting on the beautiful garment of her New Testament form, shall arise and shine in a renovated glory. They see that it is *the Cross of Christ*, preached and believed on in the world, which is to carry forward "the hidings of a power" that shall yet bring out "a new heavens and a new earth," a new spiritual creation from the ruins of the old. At the proclamation of this decease which Christ was then about to accomplish at Jerusalem, every idol, great and small, of the millions of heathen, shall yet be dashed on their faces and broken as Dagon of old. The massive and complicated frame-work of paganism, over the whole earth, shall be dissolved and scattered to the winds, and the myriads darkened, degraded, and enslaved, within its enclosure, be brought out into the marvellous light, and the glorious liberty of the sons of God. What an astonishing transformation would this appear to us, could we conceive of it as completed to-day! But *we* contemplate it as so far distant in the future, that it well nigh loses its reality, while Moses and Elijah, being long done with our measurement of time, regarded it as *a fact*, stript of its relation to time, and realized in their minds as a present truth, effected by the simple, yet sublime means, of preaching Christ crucified. They were much more capable than we, of computing the amazing influence of the doctrine of the atonement, in transforming a guilty dying world. This was the great central event with which they had been most familiar during their lives, as looming in a kind of severe glory, highest above the horizon, that then bounded their prophetic vision, and as pointed to by all the awe-inspiring

rites of the economy under which they ministered. It is now at hand, and they converse with the Son of God respecting its wondrous power to revolutionize the moral condition of that world from which they were redeemed, and which they had now revisited. They well know now the influence of this decease, of which they speak as the chief corner stone of that glorious kingdom of Messiah, which they had prophesied should be set up in the last days. This kingdom, which has to dispute with the powers of darkness every foot of territory which it gains—which finds all the kingdoms of this world leagued in deadly hostility against it—which finds every subject it claims, in formal revolt and determined rebellion—which has to contend with all the obstacles that diversity of national character and habits—that long cherished and overgrown systems of error and delusion, pride and prejudice, throw in its way—this kingdom is now to receive an impulse from the decease of which they speak, that will energize it to force its march over them all, and make its triumphant way round the wide world, leading all its crowded millions captive, bringing them into subjection to the obedience of the faith, binding them, notwithstanding all their former repellencies, in the unity of the Spirit, and the bonds of peace, pervading every heart with pure, disinterested love, filling the vast circle of human society with righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, flooding the whole earth with the knowledge of God, and lighting it up with millennial glory. And this stupendous achievement, which will stand alone in the eternal administration of God over all

intelligences, is to be effected by that decease which Christ should accomplish at Jerusalem! What a theme for Moses and Elijah, as they talked with Jesus!! But they traced still farther the bearings of this decease on human destiny. They saw the connexion between the event that was to follow, and form, as it were, a part of this decease, the resurrection of Christ, and the influence it would have in restoring one species of the ruins of sin in our world, for which no recuperative power could have even been conjectured, that is, the perished *bodies* of the saints. It is no vague fancy to suppose that Moses and Elijah felt a very peculiar interest in the mysterious doctrine of the resurrection. Let it be called to mind here, that Elijah was caught up to heaven *in the body*, and knew from experience and consciousness, what a wonderful mechanism of blessedness the human body was, when fashioned for immortality, and for ever beyond the power of death and the grave. It is worthy of notice too, that the destiny of the body of Moses is veiled impenetrably from the world. Unlike all the pious and distinguished before and after him, Moses died alone with his God on the mount. Though not exempt from the stroke that severs the soul from its frame-work of matter, yet *his* body may have been soon reunited to his spirit in its permanent resurrectionary glory, and it may have been this very event, this re-union, which the Devil so sternly resisted when he "disputed with Michael, the archangel, respecting the body of Moses." Or, perhaps, his resurrection had been reserved for this splendid occasion, and he now, for the first, appeared in the

full glory of his redemption, as a special witness, to confirm the truth that He who was about to pass from the transfiguration to the cross, and thence to the tomb of Joseph, was, nevertheless, "*the resurrection and the life.*" If these thoughts be reasonable, then we may imagine what a subject of profound interest this was to Moses and Elijah, when they talked with Jesus of that decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, as connected inseparably with the resurrection of that whole race with which they were still linked and identified by a community of nature. This event was coupled with one whose influence was yet to be felt on every atom of all the organized human bodies of the world through all the ages of its duration! It was the decease and resurrection of Him "who shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body." What a wondrous change on the utter wreck to which sin has reduced our mortal part! These events, about to take place in the holy city then, were to carry with them *reserved* energies, which, at the winding up of this terrestrial scheme, were to be felt by the undistinguished ashes of thousands of generations! The scattered dust of all who love his appearing, He who was now about to die and rise again, would raise up and reorganize in the unfading beauty of immortal youth! What a glorious triumph this, of Christ over death and hell!—what a magnificent consummation to redeemed human nature! and what a theme for the interchange of thought and holy emotion, by three such personages as Christ, and Moses, and Elijah, clad in their glory on the top of Tabor!!

III. Another consideration which we may suppose deeply interested Moses and Elijah in the decrease which the Saviour should accomplish at Jerusalem, was *the vast influence which that event would have on the moral government of God over those other and loftier provinces of the divine dominions with which they, as redeemed spirits, had become personally acquainted.* Doubtless, these two exalted minds, in the long ages of their intellectual discipline in heaven, and with the range and comprehensiveness of thought thus acquired, must have had an intimate knowledge of the great principles of moral government. They must have also obtained overwhelming views of the immensity of God's kingdom—the worlds and systems of worlds controlled by his government. They could see the equity and glorious adaptation of that government to all the various orders of intelligences in all worlds over which it was extended. They could form some estimate of that amazing aggregate of happiness which could be produced, sustained, and perpetuated *only* by the steady and increasing influence of this government throughout the rational creation. They knew that the order, and peace, and purity, and bliss of God's universal empire, whose extent and infinite interests they had been studying during their long residence in glory, depended, not on an arbitrary fiat of his physical omnipotence, but on the strength of those peculiar influences exerted by his *moral* government. We cannot easily conceive how important it appeared to Moses and Elijah that that government should be sustained over the wide universe with an eternally growing and effec-

tive energy. And now, amidst all the thrilling associations of their visit to earth, after so long an absence from it, in a brighter sphere, and amidst all the strange glories of the transfiguration, the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem engrosses their attention and fires their eloquence, as they talk with Jesus of the wondrous influence which that event will yet exert on the moral government of Jehovah over his entire dominions, and through the everlasting duration of his reign. What an exhibition of the divine character would it make to all worlds! What mightiest one of all the exalted ranks in heaven ever thought, till he witnessed the measure of *God's LOVE* in *the gift* and *DEATH* of his only begotten Son for our world, that this attribute of the High and Holy One, whom he adored, was so ineffably glorious?—that God himself could exercise a condescension so sublime—that there were in his infinite nature such “fountains of the great deep” of *mercy* as were now to be broken up and poured in diluvian fulness on a world all guilty and degraded, and bound over to the retributions of a woful eternity! What an appeal can the divine government make from that tragic decease accomplished at Jerusalem, to all the tenderness, to all the love and loyalty, the gratitude and admiration of the universe! What a new and controlling energy does the everlasting love of God carry from the developments of the cross of Christ over the intelligent creation! Moses and Elijah knew also that another element of strength to Jehovah's moral government was furnished by the alternating and contrasted exhibitions of mercy and justice, or, as the

scriptures appropriately express it—“*the goodness and severity of God.*” Now what one of the mightiest “spirits in prison,” in all the agonies of his immortal wo ever thought, till he witnessed the measure of God’s wrath against sin, in the cries, and tears, and blood, and dying anguish of his only Son at Jerusalem, that there was in the being of a God of love so stern and awful a hatred of sin—so inflexible a determination to punish it—the elements of such eternal storms of holy indignation to overwhelm the finally impenitent and incorrigible of his dominions! What incalculable strength do the sanctions of God’s law receive from such an event as that decease accomplished at Jerusalem by his own Son, in the place of the guilty. What an appeal to the most comprehensive fears and forebodings of all intelligences can his government now make while he holds up before them the midnight of deep sorrows in the garden, and the morning of still deeper woes on Calvary, as the expression of *his* feelings against sin, and pours on their astounded ear the exclamation—“If these things be done in the *green tree*, what shall be done in *the dry?*” Now as they converse with Jesus on this subject, what may we suppose were the conceptions which Moses and Elijah formed of the influence which his decease would exert on all worlds of intelligences throughout eternity!! What a vision it opened to them! In their view the very pillars of the eternal throne, at whose base they had so long been accustomed to prostrate themselves and worship, seem now to stand in a more overawing massiveness and stability! The obedience and loyalty of the entire holy crea-

tion seem now to be doubly secured by this wonderful decease of the Son of God, whilst his moral government is fitted by it to move on with accelerated speed, and ever accumulating power to the accomplishment of all its measureless purposes of good to the universe! O is there not a moral grandeur in this theme, rendering it pre-eminently appropriate as the subject of conversation by the Son of God in his transfiguration, and the two distinguished spirits that appeared with him in glory!

IV. May we not suppose that Moses and Elijah had a sufficient knowledge of *that extended and sublime unity amongst God's intelligences* which the scriptures intimate is *to be effected by the death of Christ*, to make it also a topic of this conversation with Jesus on the mount? That the blood of the great atonement was designed to effect a reconciliation to the Father, or a unity of other intelligences besides man, would appear probable from the following pointed declarations of scripture:—"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile ALL things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." What may be the precise character of this reconciliation of the "things in heaven" by the blood of the cross we know not, and perhaps cannot know at present. But it must be a result of infinite importance to the holy of God's upper kingdom; for it "pleased the Father" that in Christ "all fulness should dwell," which might be necessary not only to reconcile unto himself the "things in earth," but, in some mysterious

and wonderful way, to bring all orders of celestial beings into a more glorious harmony, a more intimate union with the infinite God himself. Whether it was the attraction which his attributes, as exhibited in the blood of the cross, would exert on the holy orders of heaven, drawing them towards Him with emotions in unison with those of reconciled and redeemed souls on earth, or whether it was a union of views amongst all intelligences in heaven and earth respecting the wisdom, grandeur, and transcendent influence of the atonement as a measure of the divine government; or, still further, whether it was a glorious harmonizing or uniting of the *activities*, the *social principles*, and the *spiritual joys* of all orders in heaven and earth, so as to bring the entire holy creation, as the heart and the soul of one man, eternally more close to the great Jehovah than it ever would have been but for the blood of the cross, we are not competent, at present, to decide. But we think it not presumptuous to suppose that Moses and Elijah, after their blissful centuries in glory, did understand the nature of this comprehensive and august reconciliation or unity of all orders of intelligences, and see the connexion which such an arrangement of his universal kingdom had with new and more exalted disclosures of the God whom they adored. Whatever this great result may be, and with all its bearings on the relation between celestial beings and God himself, Moses and Elijah saw that it was to be effected by the decease which Christ should accomplish at Jerusalem. It was "the blood of his cross" that was to work this amazing change on the "things in hea-

ven." And though so high a mystery that the scriptures but hint at it, and mortal capacities cannot penetrate it, nor mortal tongues speak intelligibly on the subject, yet these two *immortals*, returned to our earth in glory, talked with Jesus on the mount, of this vast and glorious result of his atonement as a part of the joy set before him, and for the purpose of animating him for the conflict and deep sorrows, the ignominy and the tortures of his crucifixion, as well as to fire their own spirits with the hope of an enhanced blessedness from this source through immortality. And this leads to the remark,

V. LASTLY.—That it is most natural to suppose that Moses and Elijah, in conversing with Jesus respecting the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, spake of *the influence which that event would exert on the happiness of heaven through eternity*. On this topic the limits of time, not to say of capacity also, forbid us to expatiate. In a world so replete as ours with the curse and the woes of apostacy from its God, the best conceptions we can form of the bliss of heaven, in its lowest degree, are feeble, vague, and totally unworthy the lofty theme. But these two redeemed spirits laboured under no such disadvantage. They had just returned from the upper world, with all their capacities dilated, and overflowing with its happiness. The one had spent fifteen hundred, the other nine hundred of our years, amidst the unapproachable light and unspeakable joys of heaven. *They* knew the nature of those joys, from what sources they were derived, and what events in the divine admi-

nistration were adapted to promote them. What, then, may have been *their* conceptions of the influence of the death of Christ on the bliss of heaven through eternity! What an overwhelming thrill of joy did the exhibition of the divine character given in that event produce around and nearest the throne of the Eternal! And how will the memory of it, cherished deeply by holy millions of superior intelligences, keep up those ever-widening waves of bliss that it put in motion, till their circumference shall have included every holy mind in the universe, and completed the circle of eternity! How many, in other and distant worlds, may have been saved from hopeless apostacy by the influence which the death of Christ gave to God's moral character over them, and by the far-reaching attractions of the cross, been brought to swell his train, and augment the joys of his celestial courts! For it has always seemed to me that holy beings on probation might be essentially aided in keeping "their first estate" by the influence of the death of Christ, as well as that fallen beings should be recovered and ultimately saved by it. But what transports of bliss will it send through heaven, what raptures impart to its sweetest song, when all its inhabitants are summoned to celebrate the final victory of the Son of God over the whole world, and his ultimate triumph over death and hell, in the morning of the resurrection and the day of judgment, all resulting legitimately from the de- cease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem! What splendid events are these, on which angels' thoughts and angels' tongues will for ever dwell with a fuller and deeper delight from the very fact

that they are the consequence of the death of their adored Lord! And then what shall we say of the myriads of this world rescued from the doom of an eternal hell, and raised to the joys of an endless heaven, *only* by the blood of the cross. These are all an absolute gain to the happiness of the universe that could be effected alone by the great atonement. Now, were this multitude, which no man can number, to enjoy but a low degree of happiness through eternity, still, in this view, the influence of that decrease of Christ which secured this blessedness would be very great, it being a blessedness *absolutely additional* to all that ever could have existed in the dominions of God, had it not been for the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb that was slain. But the scriptures intimate that the bliss of those redeemed from amongst men is to be very peculiar—is to have an *intensity all its own*. In heaven the spirits of just men made perfect are to hold a peculiar relation to the Lord that bought them. They are to be like him; the only beings in heaven that will exhibit an exact pattern of his glorified human nature on the mediatorial throne. They are to have a *new name* given them, which none know but they that receive it. They are to sing a *new song*—the song of Moses and the Lamb. What an intimation is here of bliss the most exquisite, that is to be enjoyed in heaven! Now, Moses and Elijah knew what a depth of meaning, what a divine significancy, this intimation respecting the joys of heaven contained. They had long *experienced* those joys, and had tuned their harps and tried their immortal voices on the new song, and had learned that its sweetest ac-

cents were imparted by the death of Christ. "To him that loved us and washed us in his own blood" was the most rapturous line in that seraphic song! This they knew had been and was to be the theme of the great hallelujah chorus of heaven's eternal anthem! But, in addition to the influence which the death of Christ would exert on the bliss of redeemed myriads for ever, these two glorified spirits saw that that event also held a causative connexion with the most august scene, perhaps, that now remains to be unfolded amidst all the disclosures of God's eternal administration; that is, *THE CONSUMMATION of Immanuel's mediatorial reign*, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, at the time of the restitution of all things! The influence which so sublime an issue may have on the joys of all holy beings we cannot conjecture, though doubtless Moses and Elijah could. At this great juncture in the cycle of eras and ages, when the mediatorial scheme shall have attained all its ripened and ulterior results, and shall no longer be necessary, but God, the absolute God, shall be "all in all," it is probable that the condition of his universal kingdom will approximate very nearly to what it was before sin entered, and invaded its peace and blessedness. All enemies to its happiness and holiness will then have been put under the Mediator's feet, every disturbing cause shall cease, and that glorious and final order which God eternally purposed for his empire shall be established, which will pour new tides of joy over the universe for ever! Oh, we seem to see the unearthly animation of their countenances, the expression of kindling rapture in

every line and feature, as they talk with Jesus on the near prospect of his sufferings, and encourage him by pointing to *this* glory that should follow, and to *these* infinite joys set before him! What wonder that, with such a theme filling the souls and firing the tongues of Christ, and Moses, and Elijah, the fashion of their countenances should be so changed, and they should appear in so transcendent a glory as utterly to overwhelm the three mortal disciples who were spectators at this scene! Mortal eyes were too feeble to look steadfastly on so rich a specimen of celestial splendour in our world—mortal ears too weak to listen to this burst of immortal eloquence, as they talked with Jesus, and spake of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem!

We learn from this subject, in the *first place*, *with what interest we ought to meditate and converse on the death of our blessed Lord*. Numerous topics of thought and of conversation must necessarily have suggested themselves to Moses and Elijah during this visit to a world where they had once lived, suffered and died, and from which they had been so long absent. But the decease which the Son of God should accomplish at Jerusalem involved interests and issues of such amazing magnitude as to make *it* the absorbing theme, to the exclusion of all others. And, my dear hearers, *our* best interests and most exalted destinies, for the world of time and the “world without end,” are inseparably connected now with this same wonderful event. The cross of Christ ought still to be the great centre of all our thoughts—the commanding

theme of every tongue. By it we are to be crucified to the world, and the world to us. From it our souls derive their nobler life. With it stand connected all our correct knowledge of God, in the glories of his redeeming mercy; all our best knowledge of ourselves—our condition here, and our prospective destinies hereafter. By the cross temptation loses its power, sin its dominion and polluting influence—grace grows—the soul is transformed into the beauty of holiness, triumphs at last over death, and takes its upward flight from *Calvary* to heaven. Oh! how profoundly ought *we* to meditate on the decease which Christ hath accomplished at Jerusalem! And, brethren, with what a concentration of thought and feeling, with what clear and piercing views of faith, ought we to approach the ordinance which commemorates this unparalleled event! Oh, what might not this church obtain today by coming, whole heart and soul, into the fulness of this subject—the death of Jesus Christ; his death for us while we were yet sinners! One hour of intense and well-directed meditation on this amazing event, especially while the memorials of it are present and appealing to our very senses, might change the moral aspect of this church, cause its face to shine as an angel's, and its garments to be white and glistening as its Lord's for years to come!

We learn from this subject, *again*, that those who are best qualified to judge of it have a *very different estimate of the death of Christ from that of men*. Redeemed spirits in glory, and higher orders of intelligences, are assuredly more competent than men to judge in this matter. The Bible teaches

that the former are all intensely interested in this most signal event. Angels desire to look into it. The third heaven, if we may judge from these two visitants on the mount, who came directly from its light and joys, is full of this theme. It wakes the loftiest, loudest strains of the praises of eternity, and wraps in dilating adoration the most exalted minds amongst the thrones and dominions, the principalities and powers in heavenly places. They are so overawed with these revelations of glory that have followed and are yet to follow the sufferings of Christ, that they are represented as falling down and worshipping "Him that sitteth upon the throne and *the Lamb* for ever and ever." Now, while these mighty intelligences are lying on their faces before the throne and amidst their scattered crowns at the feet of Jesus, what think you is *their* estimate of the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem? Oh, what an event is that in the regards of all the loftier, nobler hearts of the moral creation! How awfully do the opinions of the cold Unitarian and the proud Rationalist contrast with the estimate of the death of Jesus cherished by the bowing, adoring, glowing hearts of heaven, as *they* exclaim, with a loud voice, "*Worthy* is the Lamb *that was slain* to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!"

FINALLY.—This subject presents in a striking light *the heinous guilt of those who reject a dying Saviour*. Whilst all the unfallen and the redeemed of God's dominions are keenly alive to the great interests and eternal results of the decease accomplished at Jerusalem, does it not seem a shocking

paradox, that the very creatures for whom especially Christ died should disregard his death, and utterly reject him as a Saviour? My impenitent hearers, how shall I address you on this subject? If the views presented in this discourse be sound and scriptural, then there is a magnitude and a malignity in your sin of rejecting Jesus Christ, of which to be compelled in faithfulness to tell you is truly heart-rending! Will you not look at it yourselves, now, in the light which is thrown upon it from the mount of transfiguration? This Jesus, the fashion of whose countenance is now so changed with radiant glory, and who is proclaimed from the bright cloud that overhangs him to be God's eternal, well-beloved Son, is the one whom you reject, and whom, by doing so, the Scriptures affirm you "*trample under foot!*" The blood which he shed in that decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem—that amazing decease which was the theme of conversation by Moses and Elijah, in their visit from eternity to the Son of God, on the mount—which is connected with the happiness of earth through all time, and the bliss of heaven through all eternity—which is filling all the noblest minds and warmest hearts of universal being with new and wonderful thoughts and emotions—on which the holy creation, with Jehovah as their exemplar, have placed an infinitely high estimate—the blood which he shed in *such* a decease, and shed FOR YOU, is the very blood which your God charges you with "*counting an unholy thing!*"

But I cannot pursue this fearful subject further. Christian, how does the sin of rejecting Christ ap-

pear to *you*? Oh, sinner! how does *this* sin now appear to YOU, under the weight of its unpardoned guilt? How does it appear to Moses and Elijah, and all the redeemed in heaven, and the holy of the universe? Oh, exalted Son of God! how must this sin appear in thine eyes, that once wept in Gethsemane and were sealed in the darkness of Calvary, but are now as a flaming fire, piercing with their burning gaze the sinner's inmost soul!

SERMON VII.

“Surely every man walketh in a vain show.”—PSALM xxxix. 6.

IN the representations of human life, contained in the Scriptures, there is a tender and touching melancholy. To illustrate its brief and transitory nature, the Bible selects images of the most delicate, frail, and passing objects around us. It is said to be “as the grass, and as the flower of the grass,”—“as the swift ships”—as the flight of the eagle “hastening to the prey”—“as a tale that is told”—as “a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away”—“a wind that passeth away and cometh not again”—as a handbreadth”—“as *nothing* and *vanity*” compared with the eternal being of God. These figures of speech indicate *a brevity* of human life, sufficiently humbling and tantalizing to the fond hopes and proud aspirations of man. It requires but little depth of thought, on this subject, to be convinced, that in addition to this mournful brevity, there is much also that is *unsubstantial and shadowy* in our present existence. Sophocles, a heathen poet, many centuries ago—arrived at this conclusion, and made a declaration very similar to that of the psalmist in our text. He remarks, “I see that we who live are nothing else but images and a vain shadow.” This, indeed, is a

peculiarly sorrowful view of human life. Its length is but “a handbreadth”—its duration “as the flower of the grass,” and yet *shadows* instead of substance make up the greater part of this momentary existence.

The world is one great stage, and its mighty generations as so many actors arrayed in mock costume, and sustaining assumed and unreal characters, and performing the hollow feats of those mere images thrown on the canvass, by certain optical instruments. So truly does this illustrate much that pertains to our present life that the saying has well nigh become proverbial,—“What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue.” How *unsubstantial* is every thing that is related *only* to our fleeting earthly existence! Its joys, and its sorrows, its hopes and its fears, its plans and purposes, its toils and cares, and sleepless solitudes are but as the shadows that pass over the plain, compared with those spiritual things related to the soul as a moral and immortal agent living and acting for eternity! When we confine our views exclusively to our present existence, and analyze critically all its elements and varying phases, we feel that the declaration of the psalmist in the text has a most mournful significancy. “Surely every man walketh in a vain show.”

Permit me now to submit to you, my hearers, some considerations to illustrate and confirm this inspired assertion.

I. Every man walks in a vain show, as respects *the plans of life*, which he forms. To a superficial observer, the plans and enterprises of men have of-

ten a most imposing aspect—they make a great show in the world. Contemplate every man's plans *of gain*—of *acquiring riches*. Are they founded on sober real data? Are they influenced and modified essentially by the great principles of analogy, which the experience and observation of all past generations suggest in such a case? Are the foundations of these plans, laid in soberness and truth? Do they accord with attested realities in the past history of our race? No. They are projected on a scale of magnitudes, such as exists only in the fairy realms of fancy, and such as never yet measured the *actual* success and prosperity of any man in similar circumstances. An exaggeration attaches to them, that places these plans amongst the dreams of romance, or the incidents of fiction, rather than amongst the sober realities of human experience. No one man of a million ever realizes in all its parts, the gorgeous picture of wealth and prosperity which the extravagant pencil of youthful fancy has painted for him. His schemes wholly overlook the cross incidents that must be encountered in the pursuit of wealth, and that are inevitable in a system, where man's impotency to make that "which is crooked, straight," stands confessed in every page of the history of human endeavours. These plans seem to be formed on the assumption that man himself has the control of the very elements, and is the all-potent arbiter of events. They have also an almost illimitable compass, and contemplate a duration for their accomplishment twice or thrice the ordinary length of life itself. Under the impulses of a young and ardent imagination, man

enters on the execution of these chimerical plans flushed with the hope of complete success. Does he not in this respect "walk in a vain show?" Are not these plans in their very nature, more like the shadows of objects magnified by the solar microscope, than the objects themselves seen by the naked eye in an ordinary light? In the attempt to realize them, will they not prove to be but shadows, and elude his grasp when man in the eagerness of his pursuit seems within a single step of the consummation of his wishes? This mockery of panting desire and breathless haste, and palpitating expectancy of the crown of wealth, has occurred in instances so numerous as to confirm and give point to the assertion of our text—that "every man walketh in a vain show."

This sentiment is equally verified in the plans which men form to acquire *fame*. The love of reputation is natural, and the desire to enjoy the good opinion of others, if kept within proper limits, is laudable, and exerts a salutary influence on character; but this instinctive desire is often perverted, and passes into a *passion* for fame. Under its morbid influence, men form the most extravagant plans for the acquisition of this airy good. In his calculations each one takes not into the account how many eager competitors will crowd and jostle him in the road to fame. He does not measure the force of the encounter, that he will necessarily have with that sleepless envy which is galled and goaded to desperation by the prosperity and good name of others. He makes no deductions for the nefarious work of the busy tongue of calumny and detraction.

He does not estimate the power of the organized and almost omnipotent jealousy of those around him at his growing fame. He overlooks the fact too, that it is a striking feature in the economy of God's providence over the world, that the greatest merit is often permitted, for a season at least, to be unappreciated, and the purest virtue to be depressed, whilst pretension and profligacy are prosperous and triumphant. He forgets also that he is in the midst of conventional forms, where heartless compliment and hypocritical encomium are much more common than sincere praise. Nor does he take into account, the extreme caprice and unaccountable versatility of popular opinion. He does not consider that society is still rife with that same wayward and fickle spirit which one day shouted "Hosannah to the Son of David," and the next day cried out "Away with him, crucify him, crucify him." Each man's plans of fame are formed with no reference to these untoward facts. They embrace and provide not against any of these disastrous contingencies. They seem to be formed on the assumption that the individual himself has the control of the minds and hearts and tongues of society, and with more than the adroitness of the rope-dancer or the harlequin, is able to ride upon the quickly shifting wings of the wind of popular opinion. Hence, to the man's own mind and in the view of others these plans have a fictitious magnificence. His anticipated fame, therefore, which is to result from them, is empty as the school-boy's dream, and baseless as castles built in air. It is a shadow that passes over the plain of life, and leaves not a trace behind. No man, in every re-

spect, realizes his early and fond hopes of fame. There is a promise held out to him, that is never fulfilled, and in his splendid plans and calculations he exhibits an appearance to the world which is intrinsically hollow. In this respect "surely every man walketh in a vain show."

This is equally true, as regards the plans of men for attaining *influence and power*. The love of power is one of the strongest passions of human nature. Nor, is it strange, that under its impulses men should form the most exaggerated and even monstrous plans to compass an object so eagerly coveted. These plans, like those already noticed, overlook the deductions which facts in the past experience of our race show ought to be made, when we estimate the degree of influence or power which any one man can reasonably expect to acquire and to exercise over his fellow men. In the calculation, no weight is given to the number of notable failures that have been made by others who have pursued this object in circumstances of flattering promise. Nor, after it is acquired, is there a just estimate of the extremely precarious tenure by which influence and power are held. At best it is as a thread of gossamer.

The history of the world is replete with instances in which individuals have been hurled from the summit of power, and their sway over their fellow beings, lost as by magic in a moment and for ever! Yet each generation, untaught and unwarned by the experience of the past, lays plans and counts upon power and influence as though no obstacles were to be encountered by any one in commanding and con-

trolling the mind, and the heart of every man in the entire sphere in which the individual moves. Each one forgets that his neighbour is his competitor in the pursuit of power, loves it as much as he does, and is aiming at as wide a sweep of influence as he. He forgets too that in the heart of every man there is a quick and keen jealousy of power accumulating any where except in each one's own hands. All these things are overlooked, and the man's plans seem to be founded on the assumption that he "has the hearts of all flesh in his hand." And it would require this assumption *to be true* in order that he should realize *all* that his plans contemplate. Hence they have an appearance to himself, and to others that is deceptive. They have only a vague and shadowy grandeur. Is it not true in this respect that "every man walketh in a vain show?"

II. The assertion of our text is verified in regard to the *worldly hopes* which every man cherishes. Man's capacity of hope is an original endowment conferred by his benevolent Creator, as a means of happiness. And had he retained his primeval innocence, this capability of reaching after good in an interminable future would have still been necessary to complete the resources of enjoyment adapted to his intellectual and moral nature. The supposition may be allowable, that even a holy mind could not be perfectly happy were it not permitted to look beyond the measure of its present attainments and joys to something greater and better in the future. And as God has destined the mind to an *immortal* career of improvement, hope has an unlimited range, and may bound forward over a fu-

turity of immeasurable promise. But the apostacy has perverted this noble capacity, and involved it in the common ruin of our other constitutional powers. It now fixes on objects forbidden, or unattainable, and thus defeats the end for which it was originally given. From the extravagant plans of men, exaggerated hopes will result as an inevitable consequence. If calculation so far transcend realities, and men scheme and count upon so much that is necessarily beyond their reach, hope will of course take a still wider range. Notwithstanding this is pre-eminently a world of disappointment, and the whole track of past ages strown with the wrecks of human hope, yet every new generation is as buoyant as though no blight could ever come over the prospects of mortals. On a careful examination of the hopes which every man cherishes, it is surprising to find how far they transcend all that he is ever destined to realize. The disproportion is so great, as to inspire a peculiar feeling of sadness, as we contemplate its result on the individual's happiness. To the ardent mind of youth, especially, no clouds seem to hang over the future. All is bright and fair. Joys cluster on joys, along the utmost verge of life's horizon. The easy assumption is made that friends will always be true, fame will not be fickle, time will fly smoothly, and bring on the noiseless wing of every hour some new enjoyment: prosperity, accumulating prosperity, only awaits them, till at some imaginary point, their desires and wishes are amply fulfilled, and they are to realize the consummation of all that the extravagance of hope has ever suggested! Now, men might walk

in gorgeous hopes like these, were earth a paradise, and had they never sinned, were there no adverse elements at work to blast their plans, and frustrate their expectations. But in the world, *as it actually is*, such hopes are the veriest shadows. In a world where reverses and disappointments, afflictions, bereavements, and death, make a permanent part of the system, such hopes are strikingly incongruous. They are inconsistent with the soberness of truth, and the teachings of reality, and seem only as phantoms created by a heated imagination, to tantalize the credulous, confiding heart. They bud only to be blighted, or bloom only to fade and to die. "Surely," in respect of all these extravagant hopes, "every man walketh in a vain show."

III. This is true as regards *the worldly happiness* of men. In nothing, perhaps, are men generally more overrated than in the actual sum of their temporal happiness. A superficial spectator, untaught by experience and observation, might, in view of appearances, very naturally conclude that the great majority of mortals were quite happy. Happiness is so obviously the design of God in our creation, and the love and desire of it are so inwrought with the very being of man, that most persons are ashamed to admit that they are not happy. Hence, a great portion of society affect enjoyments which they are conscious at the time that they do not possess. In this matter, *a deliberate hypocrisy* is practised. Many a smiling face stands as a false index of the heart, and the sunshine of the brow contrasts strangely with the cloud and storm beneath. There is "a vain show" of joys that have no substance, no real

existence. In this respect, almost every man wears a mask, and acts an assumed and feigned character in the great drama of life. Beneath the fairy light and witching smiles on the surface of society, are darkness and frowns, and bitter tears, and corroding anguish of spirit, an entire nether world of concealed misery. Hence, as regards *apparent* happiness, it is true that every man walketh in a vain show.

But we go farther, and affirm that this is equally true of the worldly happiness *actually* enjoyed. To the casual and unreflective observer, this happiness often appears to be *without alloy*. One would think, to see the intoxicated votaries of earthly pleasure, in some of their favoured moments, that no deductions were to be made from their enjoyments. For the present, at least, it would seem as though their capacities for bliss were satisfied and filled to overflowing. But this is not the fact, it is a vain show. In their most delighted moments, the happiest of mortals are conscious that it is not all sunshine, without a cloud. Bitter recollections from the past will sometimes make a most impertinent, and unwelcome visit in the hour of their purest worldly joy; or painful forebodings from the future, will throw back their shadows, and dim and sadden the brightest scenes of the present. No mind that has sinned against its God, and is not yet redeemed and restored to the perfection of heaven, can have one hour of *pure unalloyed* happiness. But those that are totally alienated from God, and on whom His wrath abides, often *seem* to be perfectly happy, and are pronounced to be so, by the partiality and enthusiastic admiration of friends. Yet this is only a vain show, a phantasm,

to which there is no corresponding reality in the sober history of fallen human nature. Every man also walketh in a vain show as regards *the promise of his continual happiness in this world*. Were we to take our data from the happier moments of worldly men, and could we at such times analyze the workings of their own minds, we might be led to conclude that they regarded a reverse of feeling as impossible, and expected their enjoyment to continue uninterrupted till the close of life. They *appear* as though nothing could damp or depress their spirits, no untoward event cast a shadow on the bright current of life. They bless themselves in their hearts, and assume that they shall not only live many days, but "*see good* in them all." To the captivated heart, and heated imagination of the votary of worldly pleasure, a deceitful promise is given which whispers that these present joys will be permanent, and that the chances of escape from the ills of this disturbed and marred state of existence, are all in their favour. Hence there is a confident calculation, an intense expectancy of continued happiness, as though no curse of God rested on our race for its apostacy, as though no treachery lurked in human hearts to sting us by betrayal, as though no dissolution of the ties of friendship and of love could create an aching void in our bosoms, as though there were no reverses of fortune, no poverty and want, no disaster and calamity, no disappointments and bereavements, no approaching age with its worn out capacities and its numerous and nameless infirmities, no sickness and death to put a period to the purest and best joys that earth can give. Surely such an appearance, such a

promise of continued and uninterrupted happiness in the case of rebels against their God, in a world deranged by sin and riven by the lightnings of an Almighty curse, must be false, "a vain show." It is one of those illusory shadows painted on the canvass of this present scene, only to cheat the eye of the careless and infatuated beholder.

IV. Every man walketh in a vain show, in respect to *most of the miseries* of the present life. This proposition is not to be understood as denying that there are *real* miseries endured in the present life. In our deductions from the apparent and actual happiness of men under the preceding head, we have assumed, as indisputable, the existence of numerous and real ills. To this, as a truth, the past experience and present consciousness of the world bear witness. Indeed a world of sinners, though in a state of probation and of mercy, must to some extent be a world of sufferers. Yet the declaration is still true, that in respect to many of the miseries of the present life, "every man walketh in a vain show, he disquieteth himself in vain." How often are the lives of persons imbittered with anxiety and corroding cares about things over which they have not, and cannot have any control? Yet there is a show of sorrow and solicitude, as though it were their peculiar allotment to be called by Providence with carefulness and tears to busy themselves, and watch over certain trains of events, just as though those trains were dependent for their course on their will and wish, and could be essentially modified by their anxieties! A large part of the bustle and vexation of society falls under this category. Though our divine Master has positively

forbidden us to take any "thought for the morrow," or to agitate the question, "what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed," yet every man walketh in a vain show of perplexing care, in reference to things over which he has no more control than he has over his stature, or the contour of his face. Thus a large class of the depressing anxieties of life is wholly gratuitous, has no real foundation, but is a *vain show* of mortal misery. It gives a false impression, and impugns the benevolence of God, for these anxieties imply that they are the necessary means of altering and meliorating the condition of things to which they refer, whilst it is notoriously true that they have no influence whatever, either to remove or to mitigate any of the real ills of life. God has kindly warned his rational creatures against such cares as utterly fruitless, and if in the exercise of their own free agency they will indulge them, then divine benevolence is not responsible for the resultant misery. Other kinds of unhappiness also are equally groundless. What a vast sum of mortal suffering is *wholly imaginary*. Each man *creates* a part of his own wretchedness. It is the legitimate offspring of his own fancy. What a multitude of harassing fears and painful forebodings do persons indulge respecting evils that will never overtake them, respecting evils which have no existence, except amongst the creations of their own morbid or undisciplined imaginations, the shadowy forms that people the scenes which fancy only paints. What disquietude, *tormenting* disquietude, is often felt in view of these imaginary ills? What fruitless labours are often performed in reference to these same unreal

things? What hours of watchfulness and painful caution are exercised, to avert ills which will never occur? What gratuitous impatience and peevishness are felt under the false apprehension of these fairy evils? What an imposing show of this kind of misery is made by multitudes of mankind? And yet, like a part of their happiness, it is only apparent, not *real*: it is a vain show, and constitutes no portion of the actual and inevitable miseries incident to our fallen condition. Thus in his plans and hopes, and joys and sorrows, every man walketh in a vain show. He disquieteth himself in vain.

V. LASTLY. Every man's assumption in regard to *the duration* of his present life, is a vain show. A careful examination of his earthly plans, hopes, happiness and misery will evince that they are all measured by a scale vastly disproportionate to the actual length of life allotted to mortals. He projects enterprises and forms plans of gain, or of self-aggrandizement that make a vain show of a length of days, hardly enjoyed by the antediluvians. Were some intelligent being from another sphere, unacquainted with the duration of human life, to examine these schemes, and man's calculations and assumptions respecting the future, he would naturally infer that our mortal existence was continued at least through a period of a thousand years. Men eagerly grasp at and endeavour to obtain means of enjoyment which, if acquired, could not be exhausted by them in a period of three times, or in some cases, *ten times* the ordinary duration of an individual's life. Most of their calculations in reference to the future are measured by a line which extends far beyond the "hands-

breadth" of time allotted to man on earth. Their anticipations of various enjoyments, and the influence thus exerted on their conduct, would lead one to suppose that they assumed as granted, that they were to have almost an immortality here below. Every thing connected with their present lives, is unduly magnified, and hence they walk in a vain show as regards the duration of life itself. From an abstract view of the whole career of mortals in the present scene, who would suppose that "three-score and ten or four-score years," was the utmost limit ordinarily of our earthly existence? In all their thoughts, emotions and actions, there is an appearance, a show, of a much longer duration. This is specially illustrated in their procrastination of the momentous concerns of the soul, their prodigality of time and privileges, and their presumptuous calculations on future opportunities. Multitudes who enjoy the gospel, profess to believe all its disclosures respecting the interests and destinies of their souls. They profess a belief too in the doctrine that God has ordained the present, as a discipline for the future life, and that if these grave eternal interests are ever secured, it must be during the continuance of our present being; nay, that if neglected, the forfeit will be *a ruined immortality!* But what a language does their delay in these matters speak! Days and weeks, and months and years are squandered most prodigally without a serious thought bestowed on the concerns of their souls, as though life were well nigh inexhaustible and endless. Indeed, we often find the aged sinner, whose sands are almost run, as thoughtless of present opportunities, and as recklessly presump-

tuous in his count upon the future, as though his life had just commenced, and been guarantied for a century to come. In this respect what a show of long life does man's conduct exhibit. Yet assuredly it is a "*vain show.*" The truth of God and the melancholy experience, and observation of all past generations are not to be hidden by this shadow, they amply attest how transient is our mortal existence, even as the tints of the rainbow or the fading hues of evening—"a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away."

We see from this subject, in the *first place*, how admirably the gospel meets the wants of our spiritual nature by revealing *a more substantial and enduring life* than the present, which to so great an extent consists in a vain show. With some qualification the language of the poet is true, that

"This world is all a fleeting show,
For man's illusion given."

To every one the hour must come, too, when these illusions of the present life will be broken up, when its imposing show will cease, and its emptiness be seen and felt most bitterly. Man has the germ of a higher, nobler life, than the present. He feels the promptings of immortal desires, and the strugglings of the spiritual element within him, after something more substantial and appropriate to its undying nature, than is contained within the compass of this mortal existence. Hence, that God who made man, and who knows what is in him, has provided for him, and revealed an *eternal* life, which is in Christ Jesus his Son. *This* life is all substance, all profound reality, and, directly opposed to the vain

show of the present: *it* "is *hid* with Christ in God." It is the life of God in the soul of man, a secret mysterious principle of vitality, that is to make its full and glorious development only in a future world.

My dear, impenitent hearers, you who are now walking in a vain show, how ought you to welcome the light of the gospel, which discloses life and immortality! *You need* this eternal life. You need to feel all its blessed functions begin in your souls now; its heavenly peace—its substantial joys—its buoyant hopes—its blessed promises and bright anticipations, to sustain and cheer you in the coming trials of this sinful state. The illusive show of this present existence cannot always last. Before you are aware, it will vanish and leave your souls deserted, except by the bitter realities which regret and remorse collect at the close, as the sad issues of a misspent life. Oh, then, lay hold on *eternal* life! This is the great gift which your God has provided for you, and which he urges on your acceptance immediately, without another moment's delay. May I not expostulate with you, my impenitent hearers, and endeavour, in all the earnestness and solemnity of an ambassador of Christ, to break the accursed spell of this vain show, which binds you in so fearful a neglect of all the weighty and immortal interests of your souls? Oh, what means this your strange negligence of God's claims—of your own highest happiness?—this deliberate rejection of Christ, and the eternal life which he offers to you? How long will you continue to despise your mercies, and sin against your own eternal interests? Will you any longer "weary" God with "the greatness of the

way" of your procrastination? Let me tenderly beseech you—and especially the young—to accept the offer of eternal life *now* made to you. Begin *this day* to seek the Lord with all your hearts. I conjure you, by every motive that heaven, and earth, and hell can furnish, not to leave the great interests of your souls in jeopardy another hour. Come *now*, dying sinner; come with your whole soul, in earnest, and enter directly upon the work of submitting to God—of repenting of your sins—of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ—of laying hold on eternal life before the dream of your present life be past, and its vain show gone, and you left to the blankness of everlasting despair.

My dear hearers, you are hastening to scenes where your existence, and all connected with it, will no longer be a vain show, but stern, solemn realities. There will be no deceptive appearance or hollow form about your last, sad farewell of earth. Your "pains, and groans, and dying strife" will be real, and will have a depth and a significancy becoming the tragic occasion. The sorrows and anguish—the severing ties—the chilly recoilings—the breaking cords of the heart and the drowning dismay of your parting spirits, and all the troubled agonies of your dissolution, will be most *grave* and *momentous* REALITIES! "The great white throne, and Him that sits thereon—the glory of His Father and of the holy angels"—your account of the deeds done in the body there rendered—the doom then awarded to you, and the allotment on which you shall then enter, will have no vain show; they will be ineffably sublime realities. Heaven, in its noon of splendours

and its pealing hallelujahs—its swell of triumph and its rapturous joys, is no shadowy place; it is a divine reality. Hell, in its midnight of darkness and its hideous howlings—its immortal defeat and despair—its rage and revenge—its nameless torments and eternal horrors, is no visionary region; *it* is the most *dire* of all realities in the universe of God!

My dear, impenitent hearers, you stand this day close on the verge of one or the other of these two future and fearful worlds! Your deathless souls will very soon appear in their real character, and be fixed beyond reversion in the life of love and blessing in the one, or in that of malice and malediction in the other! Which life, which world shall be yours through that eternity that gives duration to the joys of the one and to the woes of the other?

SERMON VIII.

“ And bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”
—2 Cor. x. 5.

THE religion of the cross lays a broad and uncompromising claim to the obedience of man's entire nature. Unlike all the systems of heathen morality and of false religion, it extends its province over *the secrets of the heart*, and aims to purify and control the currents of hidden *thought*. The most rigid of merely human schemes have never made this bold and difficult attempt. The maxims and precepts, the rites, ceremonies, and sanctions, the entire genius of all such schemes, aims only at making “the *outside* of the cup and platter clean,” and hence, their best specimens of character are only as “whited sepulchres.” But the cardinal maxim of Christianity is, “make *the tree* good, that its fruit may be good also.” “A *corrupt* tree cannot bring forth *good* fruit.” “Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.” And this is in exact accordance with the true philosophy of our nature. The religion of the gospel commences its process of transforming human character *in the right place*. Unlike most physical changes in the world around us, all changes for the better in man, begin *within*, in the deep thoughts of the soul, and thence work outward, and manifest themselves in

the life and actions. The power of thought is the power that sways man. It "turneth him whithersoever it listeth," it makes him what he is; for "as a man *thinketh in his heart*, so is he." Now, Christianity recognises this as a fact in our moral constitution, and mercifully furnishes us means for the government of our thoughts. In the verses preceding the text, the Apostle speaks of these means under the metaphor of weapons of warfare, and says they are not carnal, but mighty through God. And how does their great might appear? In the "pulling down of strong holds." This is a most expressive metaphor to denote their power, through God, to remove *external* hinderances to our salvation. But can these weapons effect nothing more?—if not, then for the largest and most difficult part of the warfare there is no adequate provision. What is to be done with wayward imaginations, the hidden thoughts of pride, and all that secret world of spiritual activity in the soul? Paul answers, that these weapons are not only mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds, but adds, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against God," and, as the climax of their power, "*bringing EVERY THOUGHT into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*" It is obvious from this passage, that the right government of our thoughts is not effected by the direct or arbitrary power of God. Were it so, then the language here employed would involve a contradiction. For there is a "warfare" and "weapons" spoken of here, yet surely not for *God*, but for *us*. He furnishes us *the means* of a right government of our thoughts,

and gives them their *efficiency*. But we in the voluntary exercise of our own powers as free moral agents, must use those means. It is we who *by* these means, and *through God*, must bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

From these words I propose, then, *first*, to inquire what is implied in, or what constitutes a right government of the thoughts; and, *secondly*, to present some reasons to enforce this duty.

According to this plan, we are, in the first place, to inquire into the nature of this duty, and ascertain, if we can, what is implied in a right government of the thoughts.

I. It implies *self-inspection*, or *the noticing carefully what is going on secretly within the mind*.

All government supposes some knowledge of the subjects governed, or to be governed. And a good government is one which is suited to the nature, which meets the wants, protects the rights, promotes the interests, and controls the activities of its subjects for the highest and most beneficent ends. Such a government pre-supposes, and is founded on an accurate knowledge of the nature and character of its subjects. So the right government of our thoughts implies, as an indispensable prerequisite, that habit of rigid self-inspection, that careful attention to what is going on within our minds, which will enable us to obtain some knowledge of the nature and character of our thoughts. This habit of closely scrutinizing the secrets of the soul, is by no means easily acquired. This first step towards the right government of the thoughts, will cost you, my

hearers, a painful effort. It is a step, I fear, *yet to BE TAKEN* by many professors of religion. It is truly astonishing in these days, to notice how little reflection, how little direct effort to inspect the multitude of their secret thoughts, appears to be practised by some of those who have professed entire subjection to the law of Christ. This is an age of *outward shows*, when even the gravest books addressed to the understanding, the reason, and the moral sentiments, must have their "*pictorial illustrations*," appealing to *the eye of sense*. Whole classes there are in society now, whose attention is mainly directed *outward from* themselves, and can only be arrested and fixed by some *visible* or *palpable* object. *Material* things, substance, or shadows in the world without and around them, engross and monopolize their notice. Attention to these things at *present*, and the remembrance of similar things in the *past*, constitute almost the entire employment of their minds. And yet the greatest number of such objects with which any individual can become conversant, will furnish the materials for a small part only of the innumerable thoughts which pass through his mind, and that part the most trivial and unimportant to him, as a moral and immortal being. Besides the attention bestowed on all the objects of sense at present, and the remembrance of such objects in the past—besides the plans, calculations, and enterprises of life, a countless multitude of other thoughts flow on daily in a deep under current of the mind. The announcement may surprise you, my hearers, but it is not the less a well authenticated fact, that every night when you

retire to your pillows, you have utterly forgotten at least *two-thirds* of the whole number of thoughts that have passed through your minds during the day and evening. We know of nothing so busy, so pre-eminently active, so surpassingly rapid in its movements, as the human mind. Each day it creates for itself a little world of secret thoughts. All the attention and thoughts necessary to the most diligent prosecution of our ordinary business, are no more, compared with that perpetual fancy-work, that deep flow of secret thought running beneath, than the few passing clouds of summer that float above it, are to the broad river on whose bosom they cast their momentary shadows, but neither ruffle its surface, nor retard its onward and irresistible current. Now, we put the question to common sense—how is that individual to govern his thoughts who neglects even *to notice* the far greater number of them that pass through his mind daily? How would a governor succeed in controlling subjects, two-thirds of whom he had never thought of, knew nothing of their character, and would not now think of or notice? What good end could *his* administration effect for them? The man who would govern his thoughts aright, must fix his attention on *all* that is going on within his own mind. He must exercise a close discriminating observation on what is passing there, which will enable him to detect the most secret and transient thoughts, and to discover their real character. When, by this habit of rigid self-inspection, he has gained a knowledge of the vast number, the nature, and the character of his secret thoughts, he will then

make another discovery of equal importance to him in attempting to govern them, and that is, that they are *rebelliſg* and *rebellious* ſubjects, often violating the law of conſcience and of God. They are wild outlaws that muſt be *captured*, tamed, and taught ſubjection by the dextrous uſe of the weapons of Chriſtian warfare; a work for which he will feel that he needs to be girded with the ſtrength of the Lord of Hoſts. We inſiſt, then, that in order to the right government of the thoughts, the man muſt know himſelf, muſt fix his attention on what is paſſing within him, muſt cloſely watch the busy workings of his own mind. If he would ſucceſſfully maſter and rule over his own ſpirit, the higheſt maſtery and rule experienced this ſide heaven, he muſt underſtand the active powers of that ſpirit, and know that in its very nature it is eſſentially *a thinking being*, and that the capacity of *thought* is what gives it importance and diſtinction in the ſcale of intelligent exiſtence.

II. A ſecond thing implied in the duty of governing the thoughts, is *to endeavour to aſcertain THE CAUSES that excite the various trains of thought in the mind*. We muſt not only notice and know what is paſſing within us, but it is of vital importance alſo to aſcertain and underſtand the cauſes that excite our trains of thought. If the phyſician does not diſcover and underſtand the immediate exciting cauſe of diſeaſe, how can he intelligently preſcribe or perform a cure? And if we will not reflect and examine ourſelves, and make an effort to aſcertain and underſtand the cauſes that excite our trains of thought—if we remain wholly ignorant

of the way in which thoughts arise in the mind, and of what influences to one kind of thoughts or another, how is it possible for us to engage intelligently in the solemn imperious duty of "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ?" If thoughts do not arise arbitrarily or by chance—if there are causes both without and within the mind itself that excite trains of thought and influence their currents, then it is an obvious suggestion of common sense that we should know and understand those causes, if we would successfully govern our thoughts. And yet, amongst the multitude of professors of religion at present, how many may we suppose are seriously engaged each day in watching the workings of their own minds, striving in the fear of God, and as for the life of their souls, to find out those causes that excite and influence their thoughts, in order that they may direct their efforts there to modify and control the very *source* and *origin* of thinking? Without this, a proper government of the thoughts is impossible. For when thoughts are once *in the mind*, they cannot be banished by a wish or by a mere act of the will. The very attempt directly to will them out of the mind would keep them there;—for in order that any thing should be the object of volition, it must be *present* to the mind, or, in other words, we must *think* of it. A great, if not the most important part in the government of the thoughts, consists in efforts at *prevention*, which is always better than cure. Now, in order to prevent any thing from taking place either in the series of our thoughts or of events in the world around us, we must *know* and REMOVE the

cause or causes adapted to produce it. I may encounter the charge here of preaching metaphysics, and of wishing to make my hearers mental philosophers, and of putting them on the vain effort to understand the laws of mind by which our trains of thought are regulated. This would be to make them metaphysicians. One thing I would to God I could make all my dear hearers—that is, intelligent, thinking, consistent disciples of that holy Jesus, who, on one occasion, taught the Jews that they could commit a most criminal act in their secret thoughts, the *exciting cause* of which was the use which they made of the outward bodily eye! All persons, I am aware, cannot become subtle metaphysicians, and understand the intricate and mysterious laws and susceptibilities of mind. But ALL CHRISTIANS may and *ought*, by the help of God, in the use of appropriate means, to discover and understand the principal causes that excite and influence their thoughts in a right or wrong direction. If they *cannot*, then it is certain that they can never *govern* their thoughts, and the “weapons” which God has furnished as a part of his whole armour to bring them “into captivity,” are superfluous. Who is prepared to make such an admission? No; let the most plain, unlettered Christian, in a docile spirit, conscientiously set about the work of “keeping his own heart with all diligence” watching, guarding his thoughts under the conviction that God sees them all—let him keep a vigilant eye on his trains of thought, tracing them back and trying to ascertain how they first came into his mind, and he will soon become acquainted with the causes that excited

them. It will require no metaphysical acumen for one to discover that *companionship* is an exciting cause of trains of thought:—that the language, the manners, the spirit, the entire character of those with whom he associates, not only influence his mind whilst he is with them, but prove *causes* of awakening trains of thought long after he is separated from them. The same is true in reference to the course of *reading* he pursues. *Books*, as well as companions, may become powerful and all-controlling causes in exciting and directing the current of our thoughts. What long trains of musing—what criminal imaginings,—what wild and lawless thinking is produced in the mind of the wretched novel reader, long after he has perused and thrown aside the favourite volume. It requires no profound knowledge of mental philosophy to ascertain and understand this. Certain *places*, too, become the exciting causes of trains of thought. Let a man visit the theatre and the ball-room, to say nothing of their *affiliated localities* and indulgences, and long after the tragedy or comedy is over, and the curtain dropt in the one, and the music has been hushed and the dance ceased in the other, the sight or even the remembrance of those places will put in motion again those waves of tumultuous thought and high-wrought emotion that were originally excited there. The plainest mind can assuredly be made to understand this. Nor will it require much effort for any one to learn also that *the state of the affections,—the prevailing temper of the heart*,—greatly influences our habits of thinking. Its tastes and preferences, its likes and dislikes, its governing purpose will not

only excite trains of thought, but give character and direction to them at will. And may not a Christian of the most common capacity readily discover that *all our bodily senses* may be so used as to prove *the occasions*, if not the exciting causes, of right or wrong trains of thought in the mind. The eye may be fixed on sights, the ear opened to sounds, the palate addressed by tastes, the scent with artful odours, and the touch with soft blandishments, which will lay the foundation for long trains of thought, after the impression on these outward senses has been obliterated. Yea, the bodily state itself—the mere condition of the vital functions—often proves the exciting cause of certain trains of thought. In proof of this, you have only to notice the facts in the history of the pampered, luxurious sensualist. In contact with one of these creatures once, on board a packet ship, and though he was an educated, professional man, I was forced to observe that his principal conversation, for *seven days in succession*, was on the subject of *the good fare—the fine EATING*—that could be obtained in hotels in different parts of the United States! It is easy to understand what was the exciting cause of this train of thought in his mind—the influence of a certain state of the body, or of certain corporeal impressions. Now, without a knowledge of their various exciting causes, how is any man to govern his thoughts? How can he employ means or use “weapons” adapted to this end? How can you cut off and dry up streams, if you leave their fountain heads untouched and overflowing?

III. Another thing now obviously included in governing our thoughts is—*a constant watchful-*

ness to avoid or remove those causes that excite improper and sinful trains of thought.

When an individual has reflected on and examined the operations of his own mind, sufficiently to ascertain *how it is* that certain currents of thought flow on there—when he understands the exciting causes of his thoughts, he must needs make the discovery that there are some causes that originate only *improper and sinful* thoughts—causes that excite thoughts which rebel against conscience, and are contrary to the law of God, and the precepts of the Gospel. Now the least that can be included in the right government of the thoughts, is a constant watchfulness to avoid or remove these causes. To wait till trains of improper thoughts are actually in the mind, and for the first to join battle with them *there*, is, to say the least, running an imminent risk of being defeated in the struggle. It is like waiting till the foe is within the walls of the city, nay, in the very citadel, before we attack and attempt to repulse him. One of the methods of successful defence in literal warfare, is to prevent by ditches and embankments the *approach and entrance* of the enemy. And, as I have already incidentally remarked, one of the greatest facilities of governing the thoughts is *the art of prevention*. It is a law of the mind, that a wrong thought permitted to enter and lodge *once*, lays a foundation for its recurrence, and for a more easy entrance and lodgement there a second time. Besides, avoiding the exciting causes of wrong trains of thought, is the only way by which we can avoid establishing those habits of association or suggestion of thought that

will, from their very nature, bring improper thoughts into the mind. I think this can be made obvious to those of you who have never studied mental philosophy. As an illustration, plain and coarse indeed, let me ask why it is that even at a distance the very sight of the sign-post of the tavern or dram-shop will bring into the mind of the drunkard thoughts of the pleasures of indulgence in his beastly vice—thoughts of the merriment, of the companionship and carousals of the bar-room, till his whole mind is filled with the riotous scene, and he is fired with the unconquerable thirst for strong drink? The answer is obvious; he has established associations *by going there* and indulging his appetite—by not *avoiding* it,—and now the sight of that place, by an irresistible law of his mind, must and will bring with it this abominable train of thought. This is what we mean by the great law of *association* or *suggestion* of thought. To illustrate this farther, let me ask why it is that, to the man who has always avoided the place of the drunkard's resort, and refused the bewitching bowl, the sight of the very same sign-post of a tavern or dram-shop will awaken a wholly opposite train of thought? It fills *his* mind with revolting—associates the criminal mirth and revelry—the disgusting orgies of drunkenness—the wrecks of property and reputation—the crime and misery,—the desolation and death that are enacted there, and he is filled with benevolent regret and sorrow. Now this is the law of association or suggestion of thought too,—but of right thought in this case. How then does this man establish these associations so totally different

from those just considered? Simply by AVOIDING that place and its accursed indulgences as an *exciting cause* of *wrong* trains of thought, and as the spot where habits of *associating* such thoughts are formed. The habit, then, of association or suggestion of right or wrong trains of thought takes its rise—*begins* with the *exciting causes* of those thoughts. Let no one, therefore, deceive himself with the vain hope that he can ever prevent the occurrence and lodgement of improper thoughts in his mind unless with eagle eye he *watches* and AVOIDS their exciting causes. No small part of the principal self-denial and watchfulness which the Lord Jesus has enjoined on his disciples has reference to this very point. Happy is the man who with a divine earnestness and sleepless vigilance avoids all known exciting causes of improper and sinful thoughts.

IV. Alike obviously included in the right government of our thoughts is—a *constant watchfulness to avail ourselves of the influence of those causes that excite proper and holy trains of thought*. A good government over our wayward and rebellious thoughts, as already intimated, cannot be established by an idle wish or a mere arbitrary act of the will. We must *wisely* adopt and *watchfully* apply *the means* suited to secure this end. There are “weapons” to be used, if we would ever bring our thoughts “into captivity.” We may not expect good trains of thought to occupy the mind *by chance*, or that bad ones will remain out of it on the same condition. We must go back and keep an observant, discriminating eye on those causes that ex-

cite holy trains of thought and avail ourselves of their influence, according to those laws that regulate our thinking. It is comparatively easy to navigate a large ship, and "turn it whithersoever the governor listeth," by the use of sails and a helm, because in that case you fall in with and take advantage of certain natural laws that pertain to the atmosphere and the water. So, by divine help, the thoughts can be well governed, if you *begin* aright, avail yourself of the operation of appropriate causes, and fall in with the laws by which thought is to be controlled. The man who sets himself about this work in this way will soon discover what causes excite proper trains of thought, and by the influence of which he may be materially aided in ruling over his own busy, thinking spirit. He will find that *holy companionship* is an exciting cause of holy thoughts, just as wicked companionship is the opposite. The sentiments, the language, the communion of saints—their manners, character and pious spirit, will not only influence his mind while in contact with them, but will also lay the foundation of long and profitable trains of thought, after he is parted from their society, even by intervening oceans and continents. The man, then, who would be successful in governing his thoughts, will avail himself of the operation of this cause, and be very careful *whom* he selects as companions, and *how* he spends his social hours. He will discover too, that *the perusal of pious authors* as well as the right kind of society, proves an exciting cause of proper trains of thought. To the man who would succeed in governing well his own thoughts, his selection and familiarity with

authors, is a matter of unspeakable moment. In their influence on the mind, for good or for evil, books have one advantage, even over conversation and companionship. *They* are our companions *in solitude*, when impressions made on the mind are always deepest, because there is no fear that the book will suspect, as a *living* companion might, from the expression of the countenance, what is going on within, and, therefore, the mind of the reader yields itself more undividedly to the entire impression. How many awakened sinners have wept and groaned in agony, when reading "Baxter's Call," or "Alleine's Alarm," *in secret*, who would have braced themselves up on the defensive, and had no such depth and intensity of thought and feeling, had the very same thoughts been addressed to them in conversation by pious companions. And how many a modern belle, shut up in her own room, with the curtains of midnight drawn around her, has read paragraphs of novels, no approach to which would dare be uttered in her presence by the living voice, and which have excited deep and agitating trains of thought that she would fear to entertain for a moment, were her countenance subjected to the inspection of others. Now, this is what gives to books so decisive and controlling a power over the current of our thoughts. They have the advantage of operating in silence and solitude, when the mind is least distracted, and most unsuspecting and open to impressions. The man, then, who would govern his thoughts aright, must exercise great caution and wisdom in his course of reading, and avail himself of the *best* books as powerful exciting causes of vir-

tuous trains of thought. What currents of deep and holy thought, what a gush of pious and exalted emotion have Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, Howe's *Blessedness of the Righteous*, Payson's *Memoirs*, and similar books, excited in the mind, and impelled with a widening and majestic flow long after these volumes have been perused and laid aside! And what shall we say of that book of books, the Bible? *God's* book to man, speaking in man's own language to his *inmost soul*—proving a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart—suited to every peculiarity in the constitution of the human mind—a universal language or grammar of *thought*, like the sky, and sun, and stars, whose “line is gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world!” This is pre-eminently the great *master exciting cause* of right trains of thought. The infinite perfections of Jehovah which it reveals—the doctrine of his omniscience and omnipresence—his scheme of providence and his stupendous plan of love and mercy through Christ Jesus—the wonders and glories, the infinite sorrows, and the immortal triumphs of the cross—the rules of man's action, with their eternal sanctions—the hell that he is to avoid, and the heaven he is to win—the spiritual struggles and throes—the sublime conflict and agony that this will involve, and the splendid rewards of victory—these are some of the exciting themes of thought contained in the Bible! In addressing the taste or imagination, what sun-lit scenery, what forms of universal beauty and of deep repose does the Bible

picture in the landscape of the celestial world! To the capacity of boundless hope in man what “durable riches and righteousness”—what an incorruptible inheritance—what an unfading crown and imperishable kingdom “eternal in the heavens” does the Bible disclose! This blessed book, from the very nature of its grave and august revelations, must ever exert a commanding influence over all the moral susceptibilities of the mind, and give character and direction to the currents of its thoughts. The diligent, humble, prayerful student of the Bible will find that, by its aid, the great and difficult work of governing his thoughts *can* be effected. It may be remarked, in this connexion, that the habit of committing to memory a verse or two of scripture every morning, as a means of influencing our trains of thought through the day, cannot be too highly commended. A portion of the holy oracles thus treasured in the mind will not only give direction to the current of our thoughts during that single day on which it is committed, but will prove the prolific seed of thoughts in many subsequent years of life. The speaker can now recall distinctly, after the lapse of *thirty years*, the verses of the scriptures which he committed to memory on this plan. The power of association even recalls the very sunshine and dews, the flowers and balmy air of the beautiful morning of a long-gone spring, when he committed the following text, never since forgotten:—“*The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*” The duty that we are now explaining imperiously requires a *daily*, prayerful perusal of the Bible, as the great exciting

cause of right trains of thought, and as an indispensable means of successful rule over our spirits.

But *certain places* also are exciting causes of right as well as of wrong trains of thought. To the man who devoutly attends them, *the sanctuary* and the more familiar places of *social worship*, excite many a sweet remembrance, many a long, pleasing, profitable train of thought after the voice of prayer and praise has ceased there—the holy services and solemnities have ended, and he is again engaged in the ordinary occupations of life. A diligent, punctual, and devout attendance on all the ordinances and observances of religion, will furnish a multitude of facilities for the government of the thoughts, whilst an irregular attendance or a neglect of many of these ordinances will ensure a worldly mind whose occasional struggles at self-government must necessarily prove unsuccessful.

Certain seasons too are the exciting causes of proper trains of thought. When a man has learned to keep the Sabbath holy—when he has established and carefully observed definite hours for secret prayer and meditation, *the recurrence* of these periods by a law of his mind will awaken solemn and delightful associations. Many a Christian in the midst of a crowd of noisy passengers in a public conveyance, at the approach of the particular hour of the morning or the evening, which at home he is accustomed to spend in secret devotion, finds his mind sweetly turned to thoughts of God and divine things, and, amidst all the external confusion, actually engages in silent, ejaculatory prayer. The man who would successfully govern his thoughts, must

not only avail himself of the Sabbath, which recurs once in seven days, but he must establish and observe *definite hours* in *every day* for his secret devotion, whose recurrence shall prove powerful, exciting causes of right trains of thought.

It may be added here that *certain actions*, also, while they spring from right thought, will, in turn, prove the fruitful sources of profitable thinking. Your visits of mercy to the abodes of poverty—to the chamber of sickness and the bed of death—your sympathies, prayers, and aid there—your efforts to promote the edification of Christian brethren, and to convert the sinner from the error of his way—your liberal contributions to sustain the gospel at home and send it to the destitute abroad, are acts in their very nature adapted to become the exciting causes of numerous happy trains of thought long after you shall have performed them. Will not memory revisit those hovels of distress, recall the picture of their want and desolation, awaken your sympathies, and prompt your prayers in behalf of their still surviving tenants? Will you not think *again* of that Christian brother whom you have exhorted and warned, and pray anew that your effort for his benefit may be successful? Will not the perishing sinner, whom you plead with to be reconciled to God, claim many a thought, many a prayer after your first, and, it may be, your only interview with him? And will not hope, prayer, and expectation follow your liberal contributions to spread the gospel, long after your offering has been made to the treasury of the Lord? Be assured, my dear hearers, that one of the greatest facilities of go-

verning the thoughts is *to be constantly employed in beneficent action*. Every right act will not only constitute in the mind a *starting*, but a **MULTIPLYING** *point* of right trains of thought. In this connexion, also, and of vital importance in the government of our thoughts, let me warn you against *sloth* and *indolence*. Beware of those hours in which you propose nothing definite to be thought of or to be done. Your mind, in its very nature, is essentially *active*. If, then, you have intervals in which you are neither watching against the exciting causes of improper thought, nor availing yourself of the means of right and profitable mental activity—in which you are neither guarding the exercise of your bodily senses, nor aiming in any way to furnish your mind with some definite and proper employment—rest assured that, in such intervals, your busy powers *will* have employment: but it may be just of such a kind as “the world, the flesh, and the devil” will delight to furnish! There is a deep significancy, attested by the bitter experience of thousands, in that quaint saying that “*an empty brain is the devil’s work-shop*,” and that he always finds something for idle hands to do.

V. The right government of our thoughts implies that we aim at **UNIVERSALITY** *in this matter*; at *the government of ALL our thoughts*. That would be a badly governed province where any number of the subjects, even the most remote, obscure, and apparently worthless, were permitted to live in anarchy, violate the laws, and rebel against the constituted authorities with impunity. An administration that would wholly neglect to take cog-

nizance of such outlaws—that would neither attempt to bring them to submission and obedience, nor to punish them for their rebellion—might expect the contagion of their example to spread, and involve such multitudes as would soon subvert all government. This fact, in all its force, may be transferred from the policy of states to the government of the thoughts, and find in the latter a most striking verification. Any attempt to give up the reins, and indulge certain trains of thought, while we flatter ourselves that we curb and control others, will soon utterly destroy so partial and feeble a government, and leave the mind a hapless prey to anarchy. Besides, God has not left it optional with us to select that class of thoughts which we may regard as easiest and most agreeable to govern. His “law is exceeding broad:” he will have the *whole* heart or none. He will have us honestly attempt to govern ALL, even our *most secret thoughts*, or he will leave us to utter disappointment and failure in our partial efforts. Aim to extend your government, then, as far as He extends the claims of His law, and adopt and regard that law as the divinely authorized standard of all true government of the thoughts. Aim at a noble, sweeping universality, such as those mighty weapons of your warfare which God has furnished indicate that you are to struggle for and hope to attain; for He will accept nothing less at your hands. This may seem hard. You may halt and well nigh faint in the great and prolonged effort necessary to so universal a control over your capacities of thought! But *God* will help you; God will strengthen you; God will rouse you and inspire

you with fresh courage by speaking into your souls the sublime motto—"bringing EVERY *thought* into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

VI. The duty of governing our thoughts necessarily includes a *deep practical conviction that it is an ARDUOUS, a MIGHTY WORK*. A moment of consideration will show you how necessary is such a conviction to the successful government of your thoughts. The fact is familiar to us all, that we put forth efforts and apply a power in *exact proportion* to our views of the magnitude and difficulty of the work to be done. As an instance, if we have a wrong estimate of the actual weight of a beam of timber or a block of granite, which we wish to raise and place in a building—if we regard it as much lighter than it really is—we shall certainly fail in our first efforts by applying a *less degree of power* than is necessary to effect this work. And the only way in which we can ever effect it is by having a *just estimate* of the actual weight, and then putting forth efforts and applying a power *proportionate*. Now, this principle is just as applicable to *moral* as to physical or mechanical enterprise; as applicable to the government of the thoughts as to the raising a beam of timber or a block of granite to the top of a building. A wrong estimate—an undervaluation of the real difficulty and mightiness of the work, will render all attempts at governing the thoughts unsuccessful. It may be repeated, then, that this duty *necessarily* includes a deep, practical conviction that it is *a great, a most arduous work*. And, from what has already been said, this must now appear an obvious and indubitable truth. The govern-

ment of the thoughts, to minds environed by the thralldom of the apostacy, is no *trivial* task. Their very *number* is appalling—running on, in our waking hours, in one continuous stream, and succeeding each other with the celerity of lightning. The busy, active soul, throwing out a thought at every moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and we required to watch and give directions to them, to sway and control them all as *God* demands them to be governed! Then reflect on the *subtle nature* of thought; how it originates in that purely spiritual part of our nature which is wrapt in so much mystery, of which none of the senses can take cognizance, and into the depths of which few, if any, have the power to penetrate—how *silently*, how *secretly* thought after thought arises there! How faint is our own consciousness, frequently, of their number and character as they occur! How soon some of them seem to vanish, and are utterly forgotten by us, but not by that Omniscience which sees even our *secret thoughts afar off!* Take into the account, also, what a world of turmoil and confusion there is *without*, to divert our attention from “the hidden man of the heart,” in all his busy thinking. All our senses constantly addressed by external things—the bustle and competitions, the noise and tumult of ordinary pursuits, to distract us and drown reflection—perpetual sights meeting the eye, and perpetual sounds addressed to the ear, to blind us to the dim form and deafen us to the still, small voice of that multitude of thoughts going on secretly within, which God requires us to govern. And then there is another, and a still more formidable

difficulty, the dreadful bias of the fallen mind—the natural, deep-rooted dislike which it has to have its thoughts brought into the obedience which this government demands. The remains of that “natural man that receiveth not the things of the Spirit” are still here to seduce the thoughts from their allegiance and foment rebellion. A part of that carnal mind, which does not like to retain God in its thoughts, is here with its old aversion. A part of those affections that were once set exclusively upon things on the earth, still cling and send clusters of thoughts to these forbidden objects. All the passions and appetites of the flesh war against the right government of the thoughts. Superadded to all these, we have also the temptations, the wiles, the power and malicious policy of a mighty fallen spirit, who doubtless has modes of access to our minds, and means of influencing our trains of thought for evil, of which we can form no adequate conception. And now, with all this fearful array of difficulties, contemplate for a moment the *kind* of government we are to exercise over our thoughts. It is a *universal* government, from which no thought, or trains of thought, can be excused or excluded. The fundamental law is, “bring EVERY *thought into captivity.*” But, *to what standard* of obedience is every thought to be brought? “Bringing every thought into captivity *to the OBEEDIENCE OF CHRIST.*” What a high, spiritual, holy government! What a standard of obedience! What a control and victory over mind are here involved! What work for an angel! To learn to think *only for CHRIST*; to subject the active energies of the immortal mind to the law of

his love; to take captive every stealthy, secret thought ere it escapes, and bring it into sweet obedience to *him*; to live on through life with the entire currents of *the thinking soul* controlled and made to flow submissively at *his feet*, is a work more difficult, more mighty—involving greater conflicts, severer self-denials, deeper sorrows, and more sublime triumphs than any work ever performed in our world, save that of the great atonement! He that would successfully perform this work, then, must bear about with him the undying conviction, that such is its intrinsic magnitude and mightiness that it will call for *more* than the undivided energies of his whole being! And hence I remark,

LASTLY. That the duty indicated in the text implies that we *earnestly seek and humbly depend on the influences of the Holy Spirit to control our thoughts*. When we contemplate the intrinsic delicacy, difficulty, and magnitude of this work, and the tremendous organized opposition of the world and the devil from without, making a league and alliance with remaining corruptions within the mind itself, and these combined forces constantly at work to excite the thoughts to rebel, our frail nature shrinks back appalled, and we despairingly exclaim, “Who is sufficient for these things?”—who can bring “*EVERY thought* into captivity to the obedience of Christ?” And when we hear even inspired apostles mournfully affirming, “*we are not sufficient of ourselves to THINK any thing as of ourselves,*” we have to take refuge from *our* anguish and despondency just where those apostles did from *theirs*—“**BUT OUR SUFFICIENCY IS OF**

GOD." Till we learn *this*, and live by faith on the omnipotent all-sufficiency of God, the Holy Ghost, we have not learned the first lesson in our successful government of the thoughts. Our efficient help is in the Lord God of Hosts alone. It is by a prayerful seeking of the Holy Spirit, and by an humble, gracious confidence in his influence to control our thoughts, that we connect ourselves with *the only power in the universe* that has a supreme and absolute command over the whole empire of thought. The Holy Ghost alone hath such a command. He is "the Father of our spirits." He made man, and knows what is in him. The human mind, with all its secret springs, its wondrous susceptibilities, and its facilities of thought, is a perfect transparency, always "naked and open" to the gaze of the Spirit's omniscience. So all the causes, from without or from within, that act upon the mind, are not only intuitively seen by the Holy Spirit, but are under his immediate and absolute control. What infinite resources and facilities of access to the mind, and of influencing its trains of thought, must He possess! The aid of this almighty, all-wise agent—this best, greatest ascension gift of our glorified, reigning Redeemer—is just what we need to enable us to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." This is the gift, too, which God is more willing to bestow than are parents to give bread to their children. And He is willing to dwell in us, and effect this great work. The Holy Spirit is infinitely benevolent, and takes a most deep and sympathizing interest in the difficult and mighty task of governing our thoughts. He will smile upon us,

and afford us his almighty aid in the feeblest effort sincerely made to perform this arduous, this stupendous work. It is His office to "search all things, yea, the deep things of God," and reveal them to us; to take of the things of Christ and show them to us, and to bring to our remembrance whatsoever Christ hath said as the objects or exciting causes of holy trains of thought. To urge you, then, to seek the Holy Spirit, and to inspire you with an unshaken confidence in His absolute control over our thoughts, let me remind you how irresistibly he influences *the convicted sinner's mind*. In that case there is all the enmity of the carnal mind warring, with newly roused energy, against every right thought; there is all the power of cherished, fortified wrong habits of thought; there are the pleadings of all the depraved passions and appetites of his fallen nature, that he would dismiss every serious thought; there is his own voluntary and desperate resolve to shake off all his religious impressions; and there are all the dreadful means he uses to fulfil this resolve—wicked company, light reading, neglect of prayer and the Bible, plunging into noisy pleasures, and a thousand other expedients to drown thought and banish reflection, and yet the Holy Spirit, with infinite ease, keeps conviction fastened and rankling in that mind; keeps its thoughts on itself—on its guilt and ruin—on its imminent danger—on its neglected Saviour—on its angry God—on a hastening judgment and a hopeless eternity, till that mind, worn out with the fruitless struggle to banish its seriousness, submits to Christ and is saved.

Now, what cannot that Spirit effect for the *be-*

lieving soul that *seeks* his aid, and humbly *depends* on his influence to enable it to govern its thoughts aright? Oh, seek Him with all the heart!—confide in Him—yield your whole soul to His divine control—live perpetually in His presence, and that presence will form a wall of fire to guard every avenue to your minds from the intrusion of unprofitable thoughts, while His divine teachings and His direct influences will awaken a ceaseless succession of holy thoughts that will go on “as wave on wave in still seas when storms are laid,” till every one shall be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and laid, as the soul’s willing offering, at his feet.

SERMON IX.

“Bringing every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ.”
—2 CORINTHIANS, X. 5.

IN the plan of treating this subject, it will be recollected, that two general propositions were deduced from the text,—1. *To inquire what is implied or included in the duty of governing the thoughts, and,*—2. *To present some considerations to enforce this duty.* The discussion in the preceding discourse, has been confined exclusively to the first of these propositions. The propriety and importance of exhibiting its nature, of explaining, and clearly defining, the great duty of governing the thoughts, in order to urge the performance of it, must be obvious. How can we successfully perform, or even *intelligently attempt*, a duty not clearly seen and understood. A duty that lies in hazy indistinctness, as undefined as vague forms of mist, or, as the Spirit that presented itself to Job in a dream, no man ever did, or ever will, make a serious effort to perform. Nor, indeed, is it possible, in the nature of the case, that such an effort should be made; for it is *definite* and *intelligible* objects only, that excite the mind to action. And hence, the religious teacher, who attempts by fervid declamation, and pathetic anecdote, to enforce duties which he never defines and explains, and which his hearers do not

clearly comprehend, acts about as wisely, and will be about as successful, as the man who would invert the order of building, and attempt to commence his edifice at the top, and work downward, finishing at the foundation; with this difference, however, that the great law of terrestrial gravitation would bring the crazy architect, together with his materials, speedily down to the ground in promiscuous confusion, and in all probability, cure him of his folly, and prevent a second like attempt; while there is no such law of *moral* gravitation, to hurl the spiritual builder down from the heights of his folly and fancy work. Having, then, my hearers, made an honest, and earnest attempt to define, explain, and render perfectly intelligible to you, the great duty of governing the thoughts, may I not, now, unpre- sumptuously look up to God for his aid and blessing, and claim from you a serious attention, while I present some considerations to enforce this duty? A more important Christian duty could not well be pressed on your notice, nor one, in the vigorous performance of which, I could feel a more eager and earnest desire to enlist you with your whole heart.

I. The *first* consideration which I would present to enforce on you this duty, is,—that *our thoughts are a part of our moral accountability—we are responsible for them, and will have to answer for their government at the bar of God.* Every movement made by a nature so mysterious, so active, so mighty, and so enduring as that of the immortal mind, must involve great interests. That mind is the offspring of God—holds the most endeared relations, and is bound to him by tender and

infinite obligations. He has placed it in this sunny world of probation, mercy, and hope. On that mind, God's love has bestowed *the power of thought* as its pre-eminent distinction. He has lavished upon it the splendid endowments of an intelligent, rational, immortal nature. Can He then require less of it, than to render Him an account of the use which it makes of *all* the noble faculties of its being?—of the total results of those divine gifts which he has so munificently granted to it? Accountability for our *secret thoughts*, is a plain indubitable doctrine of the Bible. God is to “judge the secrets of men's hearts.” The idea, that our outward acts as they appear to the world, are to constitute the only items in our final account, is utterly preposterous. The *entire workings* of the busy spirit of man, here in God's world, and under the schemes of providence and grace, are to be developed and accounted for at the judgment of the great day. Is not the mind *voluntary* in all its thinking? Does not the quality of *right* or *wrong* attach to *secret* thoughts, as well as those that are imbodyed and brought to view in sinful or holy actions? And, if so, what can be more manifest, than that our thoughts are a part of our moral and accountable doings, for which we shall be judged, and condemned, or acquitted at last. Not only will our thoughts be a *part*, but by far the *greater* part of our final accountability to God. Reflect for a moment, how small is the sum of what we actually do, compared with what we think every day. As to numbers, our actions dwindle into insignificance, in comparison with “the multitude of our thoughts within us.” For every one of the latter,

we shall give an account to God, in the day of judgment. Our "secret sins will then be set in the light of his countenance." O! is it safe then, to neglect the government of our thoughts!—to leave this great sphere of our accountable activity to be filled at random, its movements unnoticed, unchecked, and uncontrolled by us, when every one of them is carrying its serious ulterior issue to the tribunal of God! Every transient thought, though utterly faded from memory, and long since lost to the mind, the fires of the final day will bring out again, legible to the universe, as characters traced by invisible ink. Not one, of all the myriads that have ever passed through the soul, will then escape the scrutiny of God's eye, or the awards of his eternal justice. O what a consideration, to enforce on you the duty of governing your thoughts. There is truth as well as poetry in the caution:—

"Guard well your thoughts,
Your thoughts are heard in heaven."

Every moment they are sending reports from your heart to the ear of God, and he is beseeching you by the future terrors, and glories of eternal doom, to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

II. A second consideration to enforce this duty is, that *the thoughts which you habitually cherish, will exert a controlling influence in forming your moral character, and in shaping your course of outward action.* No one will doubt but that Solomon had a deep practical knowledge of human nature. Indeed, the accuracy and precision with which he traces the operation of those causes that

form moral character and influence outward action is a striking peculiarity of his writings. Now, this wisest of men, under the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, has uttered it as a profound maxim in the philosophy of human nature, that "*as a man THINKETH IN HIS HEART, so is he.*" The truth so obviously disclosed in this maxim, is, that our *thoughts*, even our *most secret thoughts*, exert the controlling and decisive influence in forming our moral character, and shaping our actions. This truth is susceptible of satisfactory demonstration. Those of you at all acquainted with the manner in which mind is influenced, must be aware, that in order to form it to any particular character, certain appropriate objects must be present to the mind. If no such objects were within the cognizance of the mind to arrest its attention, employ its activities, and interest its affections, they could not, in the nature of the case, exert any influence whatever on its character, *their recognised presence* being absolutely necessary to such a result. Now, if objects of contemplation must be before the mind in order to influence and form its character, then, the more *constantly* and *intimately* they are present, the more powerfully and decisively will they influence the character and actions. But what objects can be so constantly and so intimately present to the mind as its own thoughts? That is a capital mistake of some to suppose that *outward* circumstances mainly form the character. A little reflection will convince any one, that the mind cannot be held in actual contact with any objects out of itself, except for a comparatively short period. Without the power

of remembering and thinking of objects after the mind is separated from them, it is obvious that outward circumstances would exert little, if any influence, on its character. Favourable or unfavourable external circumstances, then, are to be sought or avoided, not because they can possibly be kept so constantly before the mind, as of themselves seriously to influence its character, but because they are the exciting causes of long and silent trains of right or wrong thinking, prosecuted by the mind after its separation, and at any distance from the external objects. How manifest, then, must it be, that it is *the kind of thoughts* habitually cherished by us, that *decides* our moral character and actions. Reflect, for a moment, on the advantage which our thoughts have over all other causes in forming our character, and shaping our conduct. They are *our own* thoughts, with the image and superscription of ourselves upon them. They are *HOME-guests* with the mind, not *strangers* admitted with formality, suspicion, and reserve. Nay, our thoughts are *the very kindred, the confidential household, and family circle* of the mind, dwelling with it in deep, affectionate, secret intimacy. The closest privacy is here, the mind yielding itself to the most unrestricted communion with its thoughts, without the fear that its secrets will ever be betrayed to any finite being. These thoughts go with it, sustain their friendly, intimate, and confidential relations to the mind wherever it goes. They form daily a little internal world, and incessantly hold up their objects, bright or dark, pure or polluted, to the eye of the soul. Now, with such advantages as these, must

not our habitual trains of thought exert an imperious, an *all-determining* influence in forming our moral character, and directing our course of action? When, therefore, you see a man exhibiting the traits of a lofty moral character, a stern integrity, an inflexible adherence to truth, a charity that suffereth long and is kind, a serene, disinterested, diffusive benevolence, that embraces the world as its sphere, a Christ-like forgiveness of injuries, a conscience faithful to the whole compass of Christian duty, and a spirit of deep devotion to God, you may be assured that such a character is not formed by chance, nor by *outward* circumstances merely. It is the product, the legitimate effect, of a strict government over the thoughts. That man has experienced a tremendous secret conflict in taking captive his thoughts, and reducing them to obedience. He has had his hours of retired meditation, by which he has imbued his mind with the love of what is *right* and *true*; he has had his seasons of silent, deep communion with his own heart, in which he has long and patiently held up before it objects of benevolence, pictures of the magnanimous grace of forgiveness of injuries, the beauty of holiness, and the charms of an unreserved and self-sacrificing consecration to God, that all these might stamp on that heart indelibly their own bright images. And they have done so, and been the *principal* means in the hands of the Spirit in forming that exalted moral character which he now exhibits. When such a man bursts upon the world as a newly risen sun, blessing it with a noble course of beneficent *action*, that is but the legitimate consequence of *the character* to which

his *thoughts* have formed him; for actions are but the character imbodyed and brought out visibly in the life. This seems to be what the Saviour means, when he says, "*by their fruits ye shall know them.*" Therefore, when you see a man displaying a signally depraved moral character, a want of principle, a want of truth, a want of charity, a supreme selfishness, intent only on his personal gratification, cost what it may to all the world besides, an unforgiving, revengeful, malicious temper, a reckless disregard of all the duties of religion, of the interests of the soul, and the claims of God, you may know with certainty, that such a character has not been formed by chance, but is the legitimate effect of a total neglect to govern the thoughts. That man has silently yielded, without a struggle, to trains of evil, forbidden thought. He has had his hours of retired meditation too, when he has cherished thoughts of the seeming advantage of dishonesty and falsehood, he has had his seasons of silent, deep communion with his own heart, when he has held up before it objects of supreme selfishness, and plans of personal gratification, pictures of revenge, and murderous retaliation of injuries, the supposed advantages of freedom from the restraints of conscience, from religious observances, from conviction of sin, and from the claims of God, till all these have stamped indelibly on his heart their own dark and polluted images. And when such a man breaks on the world, breathing blasting and mildew over society, and scattering firebrands, arrows, and death, in his disastrous career, that is but the natural consequence of the character to which his previous trains of thought

have formed him. It has passed into a proverb, that no man can become a consummate villain *at once*. The mind must be first made familiar with vice in its own retired secret thoughts. The wrong must be silently revolved and cherished *there*, till it blunts the sensibility of conscience, blinds the mental eye, and warps the judgment, before the man can have the courage to perpetrate it in overt act. Now, my hearers, I trust you see how complete and decisive an influence in forming your moral character and directing your conduct, *the kind of thoughts* you cherish will inevitably exert. By all that is dreadful in a depraved character and vicious life; and by all that is delightful in a holy character and a virtuous life; by all the conscious innocence, the self-respect, the pure imaginings, the holy communion with objects of excellence, the high and solemn self-control, and the extensive usefulness and unlimited influence for good, of such a character and life, God now warns and woos you to govern your thoughts aright, to struggle in his strength to bring every one into captivity unto the obedience of Christ.

III. A strict government of your thoughts will *free you from the secret impulses of sinful passion, and thus fortify you against the power of temptations from without*. It is an erroneous supposition, that we escape the guilt and misery of depraved passions by merely preventing them from breaking forth in *external* action. Besides this open sunny world, in which they meet with many checks, these passions have a retired, curtained theatre, where they enact their secret scenes of lawless

violence on our moral nature. "The hidden man of the heart" is often agitated, preyed upon, and his strength and beauty consumed by fires of sinful passions that do not burst forth, blaze around, and blacken "the *outer* man." Such fires are the *more consuming*, from the very fact that they are *concealed* and burn in *the dark*. Now, what supplies the fuel to these intense volcanic flames within the soul? *Thought, wrong, UNGOVERNED thought*. No passion of our nature can be excited and brought into activity, till the mind first *thinks* of the object of that passion, forms distinct conceptions of it, dwells on those conceptions, and holds up exaggerated views of the pleasures of indulgence. Such a process of thinking must, by a necessary law of our being, *precede* the awakening and action of the passions. The trains that form this process of thinking, are the exciting causes of the activity of the passions. And as certainly as such trains of thought are permitted to enter and lodge in the mind, they will arouse and give maddening energy to the passions. It is *wrong* THOUGHT that kindles "the world of iniquity" within the depraved mind, and supplies fuel to the smothered flames of hell that rage there! Would you, my hearers, be freed from their consuming glow? *Govern well your THOUGHTS*. But one thing can secure you from the secret agitation, the turmoil, the anarchy and fiery impulses of sinful passions. There is but one sovereign remedy against the violence, war, and sweeping havoc, which they will make on your inward peace, and God himself in mercy has prescribed that—"bring-*ing every thought into captivity unto the obedi-*

ence of Christ." When you have learned to do this, then, and not till then, may you bid a stern defiance to the storms of secret sinful passions, and your "minds have heaven and peace within."

But I have remarked, that such a government of the thoughts will also *fortify you against the power of temptations from without*. The method by which it will effect this, is obviously inferable from what has just been said. For, if the right government of the thoughts prevent the existence and action of sinful passions within the soul, then, you perceive, that it removes *the very materials* on which outward temptations operate. It is an assumption as false, as it is common, that when an individual yields and falls into sin, the sole cause of his fall consists in the mere force of *the outward temptation*. Now, man is no such "creature of circumstances" as this would make him to be. He is no such passive victim of a resistless necessity. The voluntary, prevailing trains of thought, the state of the mind itself, give to or take away from *external temptations* all their power. In proof of this, we need only advert to the unquestionable fact, that the same individual at one time, resolutely and successfully resists temptation, and at another yields and falls when the mere external circumstances of the temptation were precisely alike in both instances. In the first case, he had kept the rein on his thoughts, had excluded from his mind the conception of the forbidden thing, and all the alluring and exaggerated views of the pleasures of criminal indulgence, nay, he had thought of the wrong, the guilt, the remorse, the condemnation and pangs of con-

science, and the frown of God, that he would incur by compliance, and he withstood the outward allure-ment when such was his inward state of mind. In the second case, he had given up the reins to his thoughts, had cherished conceptions of the forbidden thing, had kept out of view the wrong and guilt, God's authority and frown, and held up and dwelt only on false and extravagant views of the pleasures of criminal compliance, and he fell before the *outward* temptation when such was the secret state of his heart. The Bible gives us the explanation of this fall, in the following striking declaration: "He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls."

We need seek no further explanation of a matter so plain, and whose truth is so deeply written in the experience and observation of every Christian who has been seriously doing battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. *Wrong* trains of thought, a *wrong* secret state of the mind, *must* ordinarily precede every instance of falling before the power of outward temptation. Therefore, the *right* government of the thoughts, a *right* state of mind, anticipates the attacks of temptation, and rears around the soul a fortification that will defy all the embattled forces from without. Why did the Son of God so triumphantly baffle all the wiles of the devil, and remain unshaken, when plied by that arch-fiend for forty days and forty nights, with all the advantage of the solitude of a wilderness and his own super-human skill and power to give unwonted force to outward temptation? Because the Saviour had a *perfect* government over his thoughts,—he had

“*every thought* in captivity unto the obedience” of righteousness—he had never harboured one solitary sinful conception. In his holy mind therefore there was no tinder to be kindled in a moment by a spark from the fiery darts of the wicked that flew so thickly and yet fell so harmlessly around him. We can now appreciate the significancy of Christ’s declaration on this point respecting himself: “The prince of this world cometh, *and findeth nothing in me.*” No materials in that perfectly governed, pure mind on which the infernal machinations of Satan could operate! A proper government of the thoughts is the secret of all the successful resistance to temptations which the scriptures record. Had Joseph, when sold into Egypt, been familiar with such poetry as Byron’s Don Juan—had he been filled with such images as certain modern novels paint on the susceptible young imagination, and had he revolved and dwelt on these, enacting the vices they so adroitly commend in his own secret thoughts, do you suppose he would ever have withstood that tremendous trial of his youthful purity in which the prospect of secrecy, and the exalted station and profligate importunity of his artful tempter gave to every circumstance of the temptation an almost irresistible energy. No! never! His virtue would have been swept before it as a cobweb before the whirlwind. But he did triumphantly withstand it. Why? Because he had previously exercised a rigid discipline over his own mind. In the cruel malice and betrayal of his brethren—in his journeyings, a lone captive—in bondage and affliction—in exile and anguish he had placed his confidence in

his God, and learned in that school, and had already practised a vigilant government over his thoughts, bringing every one into captivity unto the obedience of Christ. And God was thus fitting him in after years to govern a mighty empire, and to become the arbiter of the temporal destiny of millions, and the exalted instrument of effecting a part of the eternal purposes of the Almighty in reference to his ancient church. Would you, my hearers, stand nobly fortified against the sinful allurements of earth?—would you meet the mightiest shock of its temptations without taking fire and being consumed by the collision?—then be entreated to govern well your thoughts, and make the grand achievement of bringing every one a captive to the foot of the cross.

IV. The proper government of your thoughts *will promote your highest present happiness.*

It is truly surprising that after ample experience and observations to the contrary, we should still find men so extensively under the delusion, that happiness primarily depends on favourable *outward* circumstances. Even Christians sometimes think that their *spiritual enjoyment* is measurably dependent on *external* causes. And hence, they indulge vain wishes that they were situated differently from what they are, supposing that then they would have more peace, more spiritual enjoyment. But this is all a gross misapprehension. Happiness of any kind is almost exclusively dependent on the internal state of the mind itself, and none more so than man's highest present happiness, which in the nature of the case must be spiritual. The mind has

an empire all its own, within itself, and wholly separate from outward circumstances. This is the empire of *thought and emotion*. To govern this well is a greater achievement than to rule a nation, and constitutes our highest present happiness. How the right government of the thoughts secures this result, is neither a mystery nor a marvel. The very *consciousness* of obeying God in this matter, and of being successful in gaining the mastery over our own spirits, inspires a noble exultation infinitely superior to the tumultuous joy of the greatest military conqueror. Peace of conscience and a sense of acting agreeably to enlightened reason, are two great elements of spiritual happiness. Now, a proper government of the thoughts restores conscience to the throne, and reason to its appropriate place and functions. Conscience is thus guarded from wounds, and reason from perversion and wrong decisions. All the powers of our moral nature are thus balanced and harmonized. The usurped dominion of appetite and the lawless violence of passion are at an end, and the soul has a calm, deep, delightful repose, the very prelude of the rest of heaven. The right government of the thoughts is an indispensable condition on which the highest enjoyment in the duties and services of religion, public and private, is bestowed. What is necessary to give to the reading the word of God, to meditation and to secret prayer, their full power to render the soul happy, and to satisfy it as with marrow and with fatness? Freedom from *wandering* thoughts—a discipline of mind by which the whole attention can be concentrated on these exercises. What gives to

the Sabbath its peaceful and holy influence over the soul?—what gives to the worship of the sanctuary, the hearing of the word preached, or the more familiar services of religion, their greatest power to confer spiritual joy on the waiting, longing mind? Freedom from vain, wandering, distracting thoughts. Now this can be secured *only* by a well established government of the thoughts, which brings every one into captivity and due subjection.

You know, my hearers, by sad experience, that the very thing which constitutes the canker at the root of all spiritual enjoyment in religious duties is, that during the round of these various duties, your minds are harassed with impertinent and wandering thoughts, and your time and strength occupied in battling with them, when heart and soul, guarded from all such intruders, ought to be calmly open to the reception and the gentle influences of the Spirit, and ought to be wholly absorbed in the delightful exercises of a deep devotion. Christians sometimes complain of wandering thoughts in their religious duties, as though it were something marvellous and unaccountable that they should be thus plagued. But, brethren, this is no marvel. It is the natural, the legitimate, and *necessary* consequence of not governing their thoughts at other times, and before they enter on such duties. If men allowed their thoughts to be as much, and as habitually diverted from their ordinary pursuits, as they do from their religious duties, they would find but little relish in those pursuits, and would be greatly tormented with wandering thoughts while actually engaged in them. To neglect an habitual and rigid government of the

thoughts, and yet expect to be free from distraction of mind, and to enjoy the highest spiritual happiness when we enter on our religious duties, would be as preposterous as for a parent who neglects all discipline and habitual family government, to expect that occasionally, when he has visitors, he will be free from all the mortification of misrule and insubordination amongst his children, and will have all the domestic happiness conferred by their docility, obedience, and respect. The parent, in this case, is vainly expecting a behaviour from his children which they could *only* exhibit as *the result* of his steady, habitual discipline and government over them. The Christian who neglects to rule his own busy spirit, and yet counts upon freedom from wandering thoughts, and high spiritual enjoyment in religious duties, is expecting a result that can only be realized by an habitual and stern control of the thoughts. No man ought to look for an effect without its appropriate cause in the spiritual, more than in the natural world. But freedom from wandering thoughts, and high spiritual joy in the duties of religion, are the effect of a right government of the thoughts, and can result from no other cause. With such a government, every duty will be a delight—the closet, the family altar, the sanctuary, and the place of prayer, will all be Bethels, the house of God, and the gate of heaven, where no unholy thoughts shall intrude, where the soul, undiverted and serene, will hold peaceful communion with its God, and be filled with the joy of the Holy Ghost. Now, brethren, the duty in the text takes its appeal from the highest spiritual enjoyment you can have

this side the third heavens, and speaks to the largest, deepest desires of your souls after present happiness, and solemnly assures you that such happiness is only attainable by "bringing every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ."

LASTLY. A successful government of the thoughts *is the great secret of advancement in the divine life, and preparation for heaven.* This proposition is obviously involved in the preceding part of the discourse. If such a government of the thoughts exerts a powerful and determining influence on our moral character and our course of action—if it frees us from the secret impulses of sinful passions, and fortifies us against all the forces of external temptation, then, most manifestly, it sweeps out of our way the chief and greatest obstacles to our advancement in the divine life. Bring a right moulding influence on the moral character, a right control over the actions, clear the soul of the secret violent impulses of lawless passions, and defend it with impregnable fortifications from all assault by outward temptations, and then what should hinder its regenerated energies from moving onward in the divine life, and by God's help working out successfully its own salvation? And yet, this is but the *negative* influence of a right government of the thoughts on our growth in grace. It exerts, also, a direct and *positive* influence. It secures the supremacy of conscience, leads us to obey its dictates, and gives us the advantage of the quick sensibility and powerful impulses of this faculty to what is good and holy. Who can compute what a furtherance in grace may be attained by the steady influence of an

enlightened, tender, faithful conscience? But we have seen in the preceding remarks, that the proper government of thoughts also brings all the moral powers of the soul into balance and harmony, habituates the understanding to love and receive the truth, the reason to make right decisions, the affections to desire, and the will to choose what conscience, truth, and reason decide to be the highest and best ends of pursuit. Now, is it not obvious, that such a balance, such a smooth harmonious action of all the faculties will give them an incalculable efficiency in the great work of advancing in the divine life? They move without that friction, and those jars of wandering thought which retard the speed, and cripple the power of the soul in running the heavenly race. Did the government of the thoughts effect nothing more than to save the mind from the wasting of time, the harassing and debilitating influence of wandering thoughts during our religious duties, it would, then, be a great facility in growing in grace. But it does more than this; we have seen that it makes all our religious services a delight, and confers the highest spiritual happiness on us in our attendance on divine ordinances. This, perhaps, is one great secret of its power, for "the joy of the Lord is *the strength* of his people." Yes, the world over, the intelligently JOYFUL Christian is the really and rapidly *growing* Christian. When the performance of duty is our most delightful employment, when upon the calm, well governed soul, the joys of God's salvation roll in from the administration of all divine ordinances, when that soul is glowing with love and delight in its commu-

nion with God, foretasting the raptures of heaven's bliss, and feeling the infinite attractions of its reality and glory, then does it mount as on wings of eagles, and with eagles' speed pursue its upward, onward flight, to the consummation of the divine life. But our growth in grace does not depend exclusively on the time we spend in direct and formal acts of religious duties and worship. The time thus occupied bears but a very small proportion to the whole of those hours of life that must be improved for our advancement in holiness, and preparation for heaven. As I have remarked, our holy religion is very much a religion of *secret thoughts*. No small part of our preparation for an eternal heaven, consists in the proper government of that multitude of our thoughts which crowd the mind in the periods of the ordinary pursuits and recreations of life. Now, as these are by far the greater periods of our time, and as they will deeply influence the hours which we spend in direct religious services, that steady, habitual government which we exercise over our thoughts in these larger portions of our time, must prove the great efficient means under God of our advancement in the divine life, and our meetness for the kingdom of heaven. Nay, such a government of the thoughts is *one of the conditions* of entering that kingdom at last. Advancement in holiness is not possible, and heaven is not promised to the man who never attempts to govern his thoughts except when engaged in formal acts of religious service; for such a man really does not govern them at all. It is he who habitually keeps his body under by governing his thoughts, that in the end shall not be

a castaway. It is the man who by this process purifieth himself, even as his Lord is pure, that is, being prepared for that heaven into which the unholy can never enter. It is he who *doeth* the commandments, those that relate to the government of the thoughts as well as to the outward actions, that shall "enter within the gates into the city, and shall have right to the tree of life." It is he who fights the good fight of faith—a part of which consists in warring against unholy secret thoughts, and the whole success of which depends on their right government—he it is, that shall *lay hold* of eternal life, and be crowned an immortal victor! The mind that has not so learned to bring "every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ," is not prepared for his holy presence, nor for the blissful triumphs and rapturous exultations of heaven. Those triumphs and exultations in no small degree consist in the perfected and glorious *mastery* which sovereign grace has enabled man to gain, and to hold over his own immortal spirit. The perfect, holy, eternal government which the soul recovered from sin here, shall exercise over its own thoughts hereafter, will be one bright wonder of redeeming grace in heaven. O! what a motive is this to enforce the duty contained in our text! Every thing that is dear and joyful to the Christian in victory over the world, in the development and growth in grace of all his regenerated powers; all that is glorious in the expanding soul moving onward to the sublime consummation of its divine life, urging him to govern his thoughts aright. Yea, more, such a government of the thoughts is made the indispensable condition

of entering heaven itself! Look up, Christian, to yonder bright eternal world. Let faith enter within the veil, unto the holy of holies there. Catch a glimpse of the glories of God and the Lamb, that create the sun-light of its calm and endless day. Look around on its objects of infinite beauty and deep repose, its walls of jasper, its gates of pearl, its streets of gold, its sea of glass before the throne, its pure crystal river, its trees and fruits of life, behold the myriads of its sinless inhabitants, think of their benevolent activities, their exalted spheres, in which they move "like stars unshining yet unshining." Contemplate their progress in knowledge, their increase and perfection in holiness, the joys of their intimate and ceaseless communion with God and the Lamb, the transports of their victory, catch the notes of their new song, the grand harmonies of their eternal hosannahs to redeeming grace and dying love! O! do you kindle and glow now with dilating aspirations to be one of the number who shall be clothed in white with palms in their hands there? Govern well your thoughts here, that is one condition of your admission to that world of spotless purity and perfect bliss. Heaven pours its light around you, to cheer and allure you to this duty, and speaks to your soul from out the deep mysteries of its glories and its joys, and says—"these are the *rewards* of bringing every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ."

It may be remarked from this subject, *in the first place*, that *the degree of one's vital piety can be accurately measured by the extent to which he habitually governs his thoughts.* Without some

control over his own thoughts, he can have no reasonable claim to any religion, even as “a grain of mustard seed.” It is preposterous to speak of that man’s piety who habitually yields his mind to any trains of thought that may chance to offer. “The thought of foolishness is sin;” and he who sins habitually, even in thought, “is of the devil.”

If the right government of our thoughts be the main instrument in forming a right moral character and directing a proper course of action—if it deliver us from the secret violence of sinful passions, and fortify us against outward temptation—if it give us that relish in religious duties which makes them our delight, and makes the administration of divine ordinances available for our edification—and if it advance us in the divine life, and fit us for heaven, then is it not evident that the extent to which a man habitually exercises such a government over his thoughts is precisely the *measure* of all the religion that he has? Think of this, ye professing Christians who know nothing of the painful struggle and the successful effort of governing your secret thoughts! Your outward observances, your ostentatious activity, your Jehu-like zeal, and all the noise and turmoil of your benevolent enterprises must pass for naught while you neglect to *keep your own hearts* with all diligence, for out of *them* “are the issues of life,” and of all the living piety credibly exhibited in the world. You have not one particle more of real, true religion than you have of habitual right government over your thoughts. The *latter* is the perfect gauge of the *former*; and by *this measure* ought you, before

God, to examine your hearts, and decide how much vital piety you possess to-day.

I may remark from this subject, *in the second place*, that at present *there is a noticeable tendency amongst professors of religion to undervalue its importance, and neglect the duty of a rigid government of the thoughts.* In our day there is a very strong determination of religion to the *mere surface*. Things that are palpable—that can be recognised by the senses—that can be weighed or measured, and whose immediate utility can be known and appreciated, alone seem to be capable of interesting the minds of the majority of men. We can see the influence of this spirit of the age on religion. It, too, is becoming a mere outward thing, that has no deep root in the secrets of the soul—no spiritual conflicts—no wrestlings with the angel of the covenant in the night of our sorrows and our fears. It would seem to be degenerating into a kind of sacred phantasmagoria, dazzling and astounding to a superficial generation. We have our great benevolent societies and auxiliary societies, associations and sub-associations, splendid methods of charitable contribution, protracted meetings and public services, and a vast and complicated religious machinery, which, by the very magnificence of its movements, is drawing off the attention of Christians from the still more important and wonderful, though silent and secret machinery and movements of their own busy, thinking spirits. Let me not be misunderstood here. I bid a cordial God speed to every well organized institution—to every public meeting and service that will tend to the dif-

fusion of the gospel and the redemption of souls. But such is the imperfection of even partially sanctified men, that this array of external means, this bustle and intensity of outward action, prove a temptation to over estimate them, and undervalue the infinitely momentous duty of a rigid government of the thoughts. And yet *such* a government constitutes all the real vital force that can propel the outward machinery of religion, and guide its movements to safe and glorious results. Would the apostle Paul ever have made those splendid outward achievements which filled his wonderful history, had he not *first* gained the greater inward triumph of "bringing every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ?" But we have reason to fear that this duty is greatly neglected by professing Christians in our day. "*Action*," "ACTION," is the cry now; and all very well, provided you do not understand and limit this watchword to mere *outward* action. There is another field of severe, intense Christian action besides the world around you—the silent, secret world *within* you. It is *here* that that "kingdom of God that cometh not with observation" is set up and maintained. You must govern well the subjects of this *inner* world—your own thoughts—if you ever expect to bless, by your influence and overt action, the *outer* world in which you dwell. But how little of that retirement—those seasons of fasting and secret prayer, to bring the rebellious, *hidden thoughts* into subjection—those hours of weeping penitence and secluded communion with God, spent for the purpose of establishing a strict government over the habits of se-

cret thought, which characterized Christians in the days of Flavel, Baxter, and Howe, are to be found in the church at present! These retired, unostentatious, yet vitally important and essential exercises of true religion, have been well nigh wholly abandoned, of late, for the more exciting and imposing external duties. Indeed, ostentatious activity and strong public excitement seem to be the great element in which many professing Christians now live. And I record it with sorrow, as a sad sign of these times, that *the services of the pulpit* are beginning to be of a kind to foster this perverted taste, and to minister to the morbid craving for strong stimulus and tragic excitement. What an immense change in the style of preaching since the days of John Howe! A single sermon of his contains enough of solid, deep thought to be diluted with the pathetic and interspersed with anecdotes, so as to make about *twenty* such sermons as are common and quite too popular in our day! Indeed, a sermon full of truth, consisting of a well digested, logical train of dense thought, is considered at present a very *tame affair*; especially if it be *written*, and thus save the preacher from "wandering in endless mazes lost," and from the temptation to make up in *noise* and *froth* what he lacks in *connexion* and *sense*.

Now, my hearers, this is all wrong. Such an influence from the mere outside of religion, and such a style of preaching as I have hinted at, are fast robbing us of the very inclination, the power and the facilities of governing our thoughts. If we are to have a deeper, more steadily advancing, and permanent piety in the church, we must give to the closet,

the Bible, meditation, and retired communion with God, more time and attention; and by these helps establish and maintain a strict government over our secret thoughts. We must not only "endure sound doctrine," but learn to relish and love that kind of preaching which will tax our *minds* as well as our hearts, and urge us to *think* and *examine* as well as to feel and weep. No man prizes more than I do the warm gush of religious feeling. To me there is an ineffable tenderness, a celestial beauty, in the tears of a penitent, pardoned soul at its devotions. But religious feeling, be it remembered, is *valuable* only just so far as it results from intelligent views of God's truth, and bursts from a heart that is daily aiming to bring every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ.

FINALLY.—This subject *is of infinite importance to the young, who are just commencing their Christian course.* My youthful hearers of this class, it is for your sakes mainly that I have laboured carefully, and, I trust, faithfully, to discuss this momentous topic. Oh that the Holy Spirit may impress on your souls to-day a deep conviction of the importance of beginning at once to govern your thoughts. What precious facilities *you* have for this great work! You have no inveterate habits of mind to be overcome as a hinderance to your commencement of this duty. Your associations and trains of thought on many subjects are not yet formed and rigidly fixed. You have all the ardour of youthful feeling, the buoyancy of youthful hope, and the fervour of your "first love" to fire your high resolve, and carry you with impetus into this

most important department of action in your religious life—the struggle to rule over your own spirits. You have, as yet, none of the dead weights of backsliding on you—no habits of slothful neglect of your thoughts yet established. Your minds are still pliant, and capable of easy adjustment to any task. They have a fresh, unwasted, eager energy, that, under God, can work out the great problem of self-government—of bringing every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ. Oh, my youthful hearers, in solemn earnest and with irreversible purpose begin this grand effort to-day! Through Christ strengthening you, the work is practicable—you *can do it*. And permit me to remind you that there is not a duty of your holy religion on the vigorous performance of which you have so much at stake as on this. You will deeply feel the truth of this remark when you are more advanced in years. How many older Christians, were they permitted to give vent now to the emotions awakened by this part of the subject, would exclaim from a breaking heart, “Would to God that in our early days, when we began our Christian course, we had been instructed and admonished of the supreme importance of this duty!” The formation of your religious character—your course of action and kind of influence on the world—your success and triumph in the great battle with foes without and foes within—your peace and joy in the Holy Ghost—your steady progress in the divine life—your preparation for all that heaven is and will be to a redeemed soul, and the condition of your final entrance into that glorious, eternal state

—all the mighty interests of your being for immortality are to be won or lost in your victory or defeat in that tremendous conflict by which every thought is to be brought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ.

SERMON X.

“ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations.”—MATTH. xxiv. 14.

THE genius of the gospel is essentially *diffusive*. It is adapted and was designed to be the religion of man. And if any future event can be rendered absolutely certain, it is the ultimate spread and intelligible proclamation of the gospel to the whole world. Independent of express prediction, this might be argued from the *adaptation* of the gospel to the condition of the entire human race, and *the kind of witness* it is intended to bear for God to the whole world. Its ample provisions are suited to the wants of all, and sufficiently munificent to meet the direst exigencies of ruined human nature every where. “It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save” the chief of sinners. He is “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.” His atoning blood cleanseth from all unrighteousness. His power and grace are illimitable. His divine compassion impartial. The administration of the Holy Spirit, which applies the purchased redemption, is efficient and glorious, adapted to gather all nations under its unseen, yet almighty energies. The change of moral character which the gospel

effects—the tragic woes which it relieves—the joys it confers, and the hopes it inspires, are equally interesting to fallen human nature, in every variety of physical condition, or in any possible locality on the face of the globe. Why then should it not be preached in all the world? It is equally “*glad tidings*” to all nations and kindreds, and tongues, and people under heaven. Its very nature includes its prospective universality. And if God has made nothing in vain, then has he not given the gospel this character of amplitude and universal adaptedness to the whole lost race of man, without the design that it shall yet be preached in *all* the world. This design is equally evident also from *the kind* of testimony or witness for God which the gospel is adapted to bear. It glorifies his eternal love for the lost and the guilty. It testifies to his infinite compassion for self-destroyed man. It shows at what a sacrifice he provided redemption for the ruined and the hopeless. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” The atonement, which is the great central fact in this gospel of the kingdom, testifies most impressively to God’s ineffable abhorrence of sin, his determination to punish it, and to sustain inviolate his righteous law, and promote the interests of holiness in his empire, while at the same time it shows a mercy that yearns and stoops by an expedient so grand and awful, to save the miserable dying sinner. Now if it be important that this august disclosure of God’s character in the gospel be made to any, is it not equally important that ultimately it should be

made to *all* of the human race? If this witness which the gospel bears to the eternal love of God in the gift of his Son—to his holiness, justice and truth—to his compassion for the guilty and miserable—to the provisions he has made for their rescue from all the woes of their apostacy, and their elevation to all the joys and exalted destinies of the redeemed in heaven—if it be important that such a testimony should be borne for God to any nation under heaven, is it not equally important that it should be borne in behalf of their common Sovereign and Proprietor, to ALL nations? Yea, obviously. And to put it beyond the pale of doubt or controversy, the truth of God stands pledged in the prediction of our text, that “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in *all* the world, for a witness unto *all* nations.” Now as God has indicated his purpose to accomplish this stupendous result mainly by human instrumentality, and as the command to go into *all* the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature, rests imperatively on the church at present, it becomes us to look carefully over the whole field, and see if any considerable portion of it has hitherto been almost entirely neglected.

With the moral map of this apostate world, in its lights and shadows of life and death before us, let us fix our eye on the vast continent of Africa, and survey with Christian compassion its “horror of great darkness!” It shall be the object of this discourse to direct your attention to this portion of the globe as a field for Christian missions—a part of the “whole world,” where “this gospel of the kingdom” is *yet to be* preached. That Africa has claims upon the

sympathies, the charities, the prayers, and evangelical efforts of Christendom, will be manifest from the following considerations:

I. I need hardly remark that *Africa is a large part of that world which the Saviour died to redeem*. It constitutes about one-fifth of the habitable surface of our earth. Portions of it are richly blest with the munificent gifts of a bounteous Providence, teeming with the luxuriant products of a tropical climate, and capable of sustaining a dense population, with all the physical resources necessary to an advanced state of civilization. The number of its inhabitants has been variously estimated from one hundred to one hundred and twenty, and even to one hundred and sixty millions!

By some it is thought that that continent embraces nearly one-fifth of the entire population of this guilty world. If these estimates only approximate the actual number, or if they considerably exceed it, in either case the fact of a large population is established. One hundred and twenty, or one hundred and sixty millions of accountable, immortal spirits, revolted from God—ruined by sin—under sentence of condemnation—the wrath of God abiding upon them—the gloom and the woes of the apostacy their sad inheritance, and yet not excluded by any arbitrary decree from the compassion of that God who hath made us all of one blood, and with whom there is no respect of persons, nor from the universality of the calls and offers of that gospel of the kingdom which *shall* yet be preached in all the world, as a witness unto all nations. Is not Africa then a part, and a *large* part of that world for which God gave

his only begotten Son, and which Christ died to redeem? Has it not righteous claims on the expansive and impartial charity of Christendom? By what rule shall India, and China, and the South Sea Islands engross so much sympathy, receive so much of life, labour, prayer, liberal contributions, and persevering evangelical effort, while bleeding Africa is well nigh excluded? Is it not time for the Christian world to awake to her long deferred claims? Is it not high time that the angel, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all nations, should have his flight directed to that land of overspreading darkness, and that his trumpet should at last be heard above the blast of the war-horn, breaking the silence of spiritual death that has reigned for so many centuries there!

II. *The very darkness and deep degradation of Africa specially claim Christian effort in her behalf.* Comparatively little is known of the moral condition of the interior of this benighted continent. Commerce and the slave trade have given us some fearful disclosures of the state of the native tribes on the western coast. The following is no exaggerated picture of their condition, previously to the meliorating influence exerted on them by Christian colonies:

“At our earliest dates, the natives were idolaters of the grossest kind, polygamists, slave-holders, slave traders, kidnappers, offerers of human sacrifices, and some of them cannibals. For four centuries, or five, if we receive the French account, they have been in habits of constant intercourse with the most profligate, the most licentious, the most rapacious, and in

every respect the vilest and most corrupting classes of men to be found in the civilized world,—with slave traders, most of whom were pirates in every thing but courage, and many of whom committed piracy whenever they dared,—and with pirates in the fullest sense of the word. By this intercourse, the natives were constantly stimulated to crimes of the deepest dye, and thoroughly trained to all the vices of civilization which savages are capable of learning. During the most fearful predominance of undisguised piracy, from 1688 to 1730, their demoralization went on, especially upon the Windward Coast, more rapidly than ever before, and became so intense, that it was impossible to maintain trading houses on shore; so that, on this account, as we are expressly informed, in 1730, there was not a single European factory on that whole coast. Trade was then carried on by ships passing along the coast, and stopping wherever the natives kindled a fire as a signal for traffic. And this continued to be the usual mode of intercourse on that coast, when the British Parliament, in 1791, began to collect evidence concerning the slave trade.”

About twenty-five years ago the lamented Ashmun, from his own personal observation, gives the following graphic and appalling sketch of the condition of that portion of the western coast now called Liberia:

“The two slaving stations of Cape Mount and Cape Mesurado have, for several ages, desolated of every thing valuable the intervening very fertile and beautiful tract of country. The forests have remained untouched, all moral virtue has been extin-

guished in the people, and their industry annihilated, by this one ruinous cause. Polygamy and domestic slavery, it is well known, are as universal as the scanty means of the people will permit. And a licentiousness of practice which none—not the worst part of any civilized community on earth—can parallel, gives a hellish consummation to the frightful deformity imparted by sin to the moral aspect of these tribes.”

The superstitions and idolatry of the natives are of the most gross, degrading, and revolting kind. They believe in witchcraft, and are haunted with agitating apprehensions and terrors respecting a mysterious, unseen, and yet irresistible power of evil to health and life, wielded by the charm and incantation of others. They worship sharks and snakes, and the horrid *fetish tree*, or *Devil-bush*, and have numerous sottish rites, and cruel and sanguinary orgies. And when under the galling burden of this system, life at last is worn out, its close is often signalized by a burial of the dead fraught with atrocious barbarity and tragic horrors. Indeed, the ceremony of sepulture is generally the true index of the degree of civilization, and the state of morals amongst a people. The following description of an African funeral was given by one who personally witnessed the scene which he portrays, and the credibility of which is amply confirmed by the testimony of others who have witnessed similar and even more shocking scenes:

“The captain or chief of a village dying of a hard drinking bout of brandy, the cries of his wives immediately spread the news through the town. All

the women ran there and howled like furies. The favourite wife distinguished herself by her grief, and not without cause. She was watched by the other women to prevent her escape. The Marbut, or priest, examined the body, and pronounced the death natural—not the effect of witchcraft. Then followed washing the body, and carrying it in procession through the village, with tearing of the hair, howling, and other frantic expressions of grief. During this, the Marbut made a grave, deep and large enough to hold two bodies. He also stripped and skinned a goat. The pluck served to make a ragout, of which he and the assistants ate. He also caused the favourite wife to eat some, who had no great inclination to taste it, knowing it was to be her last. She ate some, however, and during this repast, the body of the goat was divided in small pieces, broiled and eaten. The lamentations began again; and when the Marbut thought it was time to end the ceremony, he took the favourite wife by the arms, and delivered her to two stout negroes. These, seizing her roughly, tied her hands and feet behind her, and laying her on her back, placed a piece of wood on her breast. Then, holding each other with their hands on their shoulders, they stamped with their feet on the piece of wood, till they had broken the woman's breast. Having thus at least half despatched her, they threw her into the grave, with the remainder of the goat, casting her husband's body over her, and filling up the grave with earth and stones. Immediately, the cries ceasing, a quick silence succeeded the noise, and every one retired home as quietly as if nothing had happened.' ”

Now this is by no means an extreme case; as the individual who died in this instance was but a petty civil functionary, and therefore, according to usage, it was not necessary that so great a display should be made as though he had held a more exalted office. Authentic history records that on the death of one of the kings of the Aikims, (a tribe located not far from the British colony of Sierra Leone,) his people *sacrificed* at his tomb *his prime minister, three hundred and thirty-six of his wives,* and upwards of ONE THOUSAND *of his slaves!!* The object of this wholesale immolation of human beings was, that the king might be furnished with *a suitable re-tinue*—one befitting *royalty*—in the future world, on which he had entered.

The most horrible fact in these funeral sacrifices, is, that *the victims are buried alive*, their limbs being all broken, and they thrown into open graves, where they linger in great agony through the period of the dances, processions, and music around them, which forms part of the ceremony, and sometimes continue during the whole of two days!!* Such is a faint sketch of the darkness of Africa, un-

* It is estimated that there are from *thirty to fifty millions* of slaves in Africa, all of whose lives are at the mercy of their owners, and any of whom may share the fate of those just described, should they happen to belong even to a petty captain or chief of a village. This, surely, is the most direful form of slavery. Would it not be well for some of *our* prominent Christian philanthropists to turn their attention to *slavery* in Africa, and ask themselves before God and conscience, how much their zeal has done, or how much they have prayed or purposed to do, for the abolition of this system of slavery, fraught as it is, with a thousandfold more horrors, and embracing from ten to twenty times more in numbers, than the system which has hitherto exhausted all their energies and resources of head, heart, and pocket.

happy, almost unpitied, Africa. Now, does this dense gloom of pagan night that shrouds her and these demons of pagan superstition that prowl beneath its starless canopy, deter from Christian effort in her behalf? No. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Her sombre shadows have a silent eloquence, more powerful than words, that calls imperiously for effort to shed upon them the light of life. To the pure and piercing vision of a Saviour's omniscience, *every* part of this guilty world once looked more dark and dismal than does Africa now to the Christian's eye. But this stayed not his embassy of love. Yearning with infinite compassion, he made his cheerful advent amidst the gloom, and became "the light of the world." The gross darkness which covered all people, proved only a more powerful incentive to his active pity. And so the unbroken cloud of Africa's paganism and superstition, the barriers of ignorance, and the great gulfs which separate her hapless children from civilization, science, and Christianity, make an irresistible appeal to our sympathies, and demand our faith, patience, prayer, hope, liberality, and persevering exertions for the regeneration of that ill-starred continent.

III. *The wrongs and ills which its inhabitants have suffered from the civilized world, demand no less redress than sending the gospel to Africa.*

For centuries the history of the African race has been one of mournful and tragic interest, and their sad destinies a profound mystery, in the righteous providence of God over the world. The slave trade, with all its direct and collateral miseries and de-

vastations, with its fiendish rapacity, piracy, and enormous vices, has been plied on the devoted inhabitants of Africa with an industry that has never tired nor paused, and a cruel cupidity that has never relented, for the last four or five hundred years. Millions of her unoffending children have been torn from her bosom amidst circumstances that give to separation its most poignant agony. They have been made the servants of servants in every land of their dispersion. Doomed to returnless exile, and bound to perpetual servitude, they have worn out their lives in unrequited toil, in an unwearied and joyless industry, for the interests of those who originally stole them, and the accomplices who imposed on them the galling and permanent bonds of their slavery. Nor do the millions exiled, dispersed, and hopelessly enslaved for life, form the only figures in the dark picture of Africa's wrongs and ills. To say nothing of the inconceivable horrors of "the middle passage" in the slave ships, the enormous mortality and maddening suicide of the victims on their pathway over the deep to the land of their bondage, yet the very mode of obtaining slaves in Africa, presents an aggregation of hellish outrages upon human nature, which no language can adequately portray. To assist you in approaching towards some just conceptions of the egregious wrongs and injuries inflicted by this infernal traffic, I will now give you a description, written by an eye witness, of the manner of obtaining slaves to meet a certain demand in the market. The writer remarks:

"The following incident I relate, not for its singularity, for similar events take place, perhaps, every

month in the year; but because it has fallen under my own observation, and I can vouch for its authenticity. King Boatswain received a quantity of goods in trade from a French slaver, for which he stipulated to pay young slaves. He makes it a point of honour to be punctual to his engagements. The time was at hand when he expected the return of the slaver. He had not the slaves. Looking round on the peaceable tribes about him, for his victims, he singled out the Queahs, a small agricultural and trading people, of most inoffensive character. His warriors were skilfully distributed to the different hamlets, and making a simultaneous assault on the sleeping occupants in the dead of night, accomplished, without difficulty or resistance, the annihilation, with the exception of a few towns, of the whole tribe. Every adult, man and woman, was murdered; very young children generally shared the fate of their parents; the boys and girls alone were reserved to pay the Frenchman."

I know, that by a law of mind, great local distance diminishes our sympathy and interest in the most appalling events that occur in the history of suffering humanity. But let us divest the scene just described of distance, and bring it home in our imaginings to one of our neighbouring villages. Let us also divest it of distance in time, and suppose ourselves standing the next morning the actual spectators of the results of the horrid tragedy enacted there the night before! What would be *our* impressions? And did we associate similar events as occurring in other villages and hamlets throughout our country, perhaps, every month in the year, how *appalling*

would *our own existence itself* become to us in such circumstances!! Now, all these wrongs and outrages above described, are not the less real and grievous, the suffering has no less of depth and intensity, because their locality lies beyond the Atlantic in the land of the palm tree, and the sufferers are distinguished from us by the hues of their skin.

It deserves special notice here, also, that most of those savage, sanguinary, and exterminating wars waged under various pretexts on each other by the native tribes, are, in fact, excited by the desire of obtaining slaves for the market. When you add to this, the introduction of intoxicating drinks by the slave traders, their example of beastly licentiousness, the teaching of all the most intense vices of a corrupt civilization which savages could learn, and the constant stimulus which their intercourse with them, brought upon the worst passions of barbarous human nature, you have a picture of wrongs and ills unparalleled in the annals of our world! And *who* has inflicted this outrageous and overgrown aggregate of injuries on Africa? Professedly *Christian nations!* Yes, the Lion of Great Britain, and the Eagle of America, formerly crouching and perching over the deck of the slave ships, as they bore away Africa's sons and daughters to hopeless bondage. Does not Christendom *owe* a mighty debt to that despoiled, bereaved land? Like Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not; does not Africa's voice of lamentation cry to heaven against the civilized world, and call upon our common humanity for redress? Now, what adequate reparation can we make for

wrongs, violence, and havoc of centuries, without parallel, and in some respects irretrievable? The act of tardy justice in making sound and stringent laws against the slave trade, and in placing armed squadrons on the coast to suppress this unnatural and inhuman commerce in souls, is no competent requital for the enormous evils inflicted on Africa, nor does it form the efficient instrumentality by which those evils are ultimately to be removed. No. We must send her "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." *This is the redress* which the eloquence of Africa's wo pleads for, and claims at our hands. It is the only adequate, infallible remedy, for the gigantic evils under which she groans. Experiment is beginning to teach this obvious, but hitherto overlooked, truth. The British Parliament has been petitioned to discontinue an armed force for the suppression of the slave trade, on the ground that the evils of the traffic have been greatly increased by it, while it is well known that the number of slaves annually shipped has not been diminished. Capt. Harris, an intelligent English officer, extensively travelled in Africa, was sent there, specially commissioned by the British government, to investigate the matter, and report the best method of extinguishing the slave trade. The conclusion which he has drawn from his personal knowledge and extensive observations on this subject, is, that the slave trade can never be suppressed *while the barbarous and pagan spirit of Africa herself is in favour of it.* The only remedy that he thinks adapted to remove this evil permanently, is the civilization and *Christianization of Africa herself.*

Armed squadrons, therefore, have no tendency to promote so great a civil and moral transformation on Africa, as are here contemplated. The Christian philosopher needs not be informed that the combined armadas of the world can never cure this, nor any other of the giant crimes and woes of the apostacy. We must take Heaven's infallible panacea, "*this gospel of the kingdom,*" in all its benign and blessed influences on man's mortal and immortal interests and destinies. This is Africa's only hope of a radical remedy, as it is that of all the rest of the world that lieth in wickedness. It is a growing conviction, even in irreligious minds, that if Africa is to be saved from the perpetual desolations of slavery and the slave trade, it must be by pervading her with the institutions of civilization and Christianity.

Let the Christian world, then, awake and put forth an earnest, persevering effort to cancel some of its guilt in heretofore afflicting Africa, by sending to her the glorious gospel in its divine power, to pull down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and, in its sweet, assuaging influence on the barbarous passions of human nature, calming and purifying the fountains of domestic, social, and political life, till

"Lions and beasts of savage name
Put on the nature of the lamb."

IV. *The long neglect of the Christian world to do any thing efficiently for the evangelization of Africa, gives her an urgent claim upon its special efforts now.* By what fatality the one hundred and twenty, or one hundred and fifty millions

of that darkened continent have been so long, and to such an extent, excluded from the sympathies and effective evangelical efforts of Christendom, is one of the most unaccountable facts in the history of Christian benevolence. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions have between five and six hundred missionaries and assistant missionaries amongst the heathen. Of this entire number but about twenty are located on the whole continent of Africa, and the date of their labours there is quite recent. There are *eighty-eight* missionaries and assistants in the Sandwich Islands, the whole population of which is but one hundred and twenty thousand—not one thousand to every *million* in Africa. It is true, the striking mortality amongst *white* missionaries in that country has imposed a necessity of hesitating to risk life on a large scale there. But the providence of God for twenty-five years past has demonstrated that the civilized, Christian *coloured* man of this country *can* live and labour for God, and for the souls of his pagan brethren, in his father land. And yet the Christian world has slept over the moral ruins, the maddening woes, and the mournful destinies of the immortal millions in Africa, wrapt in golden dreams respecting the great things being done for Greece, India, China, Persia, and the islands of the Southern Ocean. Now, may not “the time past suffice” to have wrought this folly and incurred this guilt of shutting up our tender mercies from the most oppressed, wronged, injured, outraged, helpless, and deplorable portion of the pagan world? Do not our delay and slumbers give a startling emphasis to the

truth "that now it is high time to awake out of sleep"—to "cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light"—to bear the banner of the cross, with its "seven stars," to benighted Africa—and to spring forward and reach forth *our* hands to hold up those which Ethiopia has already stretched out unto God?

V. and LASTLY.—*The encouragement to evangelical effort which the providence of God in planting and sustaining civilized and Christian colonies on the coast now affords, gives Africa a peculiar claim on the active benevolence of the Christian world.* It is admitted that till within a comparatively recent period serious, if not insuperable obstacles were to be encountered in the prosecution of Christian missions in Africa. During the last four centuries numerous and repeated attempts have been made, both by Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries, to establish themselves on the western coast, and to locate permanently there the institutions of Christianity. But all such attempts proved utterly abortive till the era of the establishment of civilized colonies. This is a matter of undoubted historical *fact*. That state of intense vice and sanguinary barbarism which, till the close of the last century, rendered it impossible to maintain trading factories on the shore, and that made it unsafe even to land a merchant-ship there, would necessarily involve perils to life and property too formidable to be permanently encountered by any degree of missionary zeal and courage. The selfishness and dishonesty, the treachery and rapacity, the turbulent spirit and savage cruelty of the na-

tives, involved as they constantly were in exterminating wars with each other, presented invincible and hopeless barriers to the progress of the gospel of peace amongst them. It was not surprising, therefore, that, as late as the close of the last century, with the history of three or four hundred years of disaster and defeat to missions in Africa, Christendom should have paused in partial despondency over her gloomy and appalling condition! But since that time the providence of God has fringed the edge of that dark cloud which then overhung her with some rays of golden light. The divine hand and counsel have been specially manifested in planting and sustaining civilized and Christian colonies along the western coast, with all their meliorating effects on the natives, and their protecting and fostering influence on Christian missions.

Colonization is undeniably preparing the way of the Lord in the wilderness of Africa. God would seem to be pointing to this enterprise, by all the recent facts in its history, as His *approved* method of reaching forth and rendering permanent an effective evangelical influence on that long and grossly neglected land. The change in the social, civil, and religious condition of those native tribes amongst whom colonies have been located is well nigh incredible. The following is a brief but truthful sketch of the colonies, and of what, under God, they have already effected for the best interests of the coloured race in their own land. It is from the pen of a sober-minded, accurate, reliable author. He remarks as follows:—

“Every such colony planted, still subsists; and

wherever its jurisdiction extends, has banished piracy and the slave-trade—extinguished domestic slavery—put an end to human sacrifices and cannibalism—established a constitutional civil government, trial by jury, and the reign of law—introduced the arts, usages, and comforts of civilized life, and imparted them to more or less of the natives—established schools, built houses of worship, gathered churches, sustained the preaching of the gospel, protected missionaries, and seen native converts received to Christian communion. *Not a colony has been attempted without leading to all these results.*

“As witnesses, we show, in the colonies of Cape Palmas, Liberia proper, Sierra Leone, and on the Gambia, more than one hundred missionaries and assistant missionaries, many of them of African descent, and some of them native Africans, now engaged in successful labours for the regeneration of Africa. We show, as the fruits of their labours, more than five thousand regular communicants in Christian churches, more than twelve thousand regular attendants on the preaching of the gospel, and many tens of thousands of natives perfectly accessible to missionary labours. All this has been done since the settlement of Sierra Leone in 1787, and nearly all since the settlement of Liberia in 1822.”

In the colonies of Liberia proper there are twenty-three Christian churches, numbering about sixteen or seventeen hundred communicants; of whom more than *five hundred* are *native* converts. From ten to fifteen thousand of the pagan tribes have thrown away the distinctive badges of their superstition, abandoned many of the usages of savage life and the

practice of idolatry, adopted the civilized costume of the colonists, come voluntarily under the colonial laws, and conformed to the externals of civilization and Christianity, many of them attending public worship on the Sabbath in the colonial churches. Gov. Roberts, of Liberia, states that in a tour of more than two hundred miles into the interior of Africa, he found manifest traces of colonial influence extending through the entire distance; that there were individuals in every place where he stopped who could speak the English language; that the chiefs of the different tribes through which he passed evinced the utmost eagerness to have schools established amongst them, in which their children might be taught the knowledge of the arts of civilization and the truths of the Christian religion, and that "the head men" offered to erect buildings and appropriate lands for the support of these institutions. It is well known, also, that the sons of chiefs, and of other distinguished natives, have been sent a distance of three or four hundred miles from the interior into the colony, to be educated. When they return into the deep shadows of their native forests, and the deeper moral gloom of their pagan homes, they carry with them the torchlights of civilization and Christianity, to send some cheering rays athwart the surrounding and hitherto unbroken darkness. Thus the providence of God, by originating and giving success to the enterprise of colonization, is opening a new door of hope to despairing Africa, and furnishing new facilities and ample encouragement to enlarged and vigorous evangelic labours in her behalf. It may be added, too,

that notwithstanding the intense vice and savage degradation of the natives on the coast, and the gloomy and base superstition and idolatry of those in the interior, yet there are three striking points of encouragement to missionary labour in Africa, not found in most other heathen countries.

“First, then, they have no national religion, or religious establishment. Where this exists it opposes a formidable obstacle to the gospel, however absurd may be the superstition so established; for the secular interests of the priesthood urge them to resist any change of the national religion, and they necessarily possess great influence with the people. The missionary must, under such circumstances, expect to encounter hate and persecution proportioned to the danger with which the religion he teaches threatens the priests.

“Secondly. In Africa the kings and their official functionaries lose no secular advantages by embracing Christianity. On the contrary, they are even raised by it in the estimation of their heathen countrymen. In many, and, perhaps, in nearly all other heathen countries, to embrace Christianity is to become obnoxious to priestly revenge, to popular hate and civil oppression.

“Thirdly. The Africans already look upon the white man as their superior, and hence desire to imitate him. The very ability to read and write gives dignity and importance to a coloured man among them, and they express their admiration by calling him a white man. It would follow, of course, that they embrace every opportunity to place their children in the schools where it is proposed to teach them to read and write.”

Such are the encouragements to Christian effort for Africa which the providence of God, especially in establishing and sustaining civilized colonies there, now presents. With so well tested and practicable a method, and with such ample facilities for the spread of the gospel as the scheme of colonization affords, and as the success already attending it demonstrates, why should not darkened Africa soon be made "all light in the Lord?" How can the Christian world answer it to God, or to their successors in the church, if they neglect longer to put forth the most vigorous and persevering efforts for Africa's redemption through this medium of colonization, pointed out by the finger of God, and signalized and sanctioned by a success explicable only on the assumption of his divine and fostering interposition in its behalf? Shall the wretched inhabitants *continue* to sit in the region and shadow of death, and to sink from it annually by millions into "the blackness of darkness for ever," when God, by his providence, is demonstrating that the light of life may be radiated over the extent of Africa by civilized and Christian colonies on her coast?

These are questions in which you, my Christian friends, and the whole Christian community, have a deep personal interest. They relate to serious matters involved in your present duty, as individuals, towards a large, injured, suffering, hitherto neglected portion of your heathen fellow men. God has opened a channel through which your beneficence can flow and overflow till it shall have reached the remotest wilderness in Africa, and made it to bud and blossom as the rose. Will you assist in

keeping this channel open?—and will you augment that stream which has already well nigh covered three hundred miles of once barren coast with plants, and flowers, and fruits of righteousness befitting the garden of God? This method of evangelical effort, feeling its way into the darkness of Africa, and retaining its foothold there through the colonies on her coast, is commended to the confidence of the Christian world now by *its own already realized results*. It is *the only practicable method* as yet discovered of furnishing the protection and facilities for that augmented number of labourers, and those extensive and permanent missionary enterprises and efforts, which will bear some just proportion to the moral exigencies of that vast continent. It is too late now to make it a question whether the success of modern missions in Africa has not been, under God, mainly suspended on the direct and indirect influence of these colonies. History has now recorded this as one of her sober, indisputable verities. The fact that colonization has a *secular* and *political* aspect is no objection to it as a medium through which to send the blessings of civilization and Christianity to Africa. Let it be remembered that its secular and political relations bear with benign effect on the temporal interests and destinies of the coloured people of this country, and contemplate their intellectual, social, and civil elevation in circumstances unimpeded by prejudice and privileged competition, and are intended to confer on them the advantages and immunities of a wise and well-ordered republican government. Indeed, these relations and bearings of colonization ought to com-

mend it to all the Christian patriots of this great American republic, as the medium of blessing Africa with the gospel.

The establishment of the commonwealth of Liberia is the first attempt by the citizens of this country to plant in a foreign land the peculiar institutions of their own. This fact is fraught with thrilling interest to the enlightened American statesman, and is one of bright auguries to Africa and the African race. It would seem as though that which the scriptures notice as a truth in the natural history of the parent eagle, is now metaphorically true of our national eagle—"She stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them upon her wings." Ours has taken its *firstling* and set him upon the heights of Cape Mesurado, to mount thence on his circling ascent towards the sun, and to shed from his wings the blessings of republican liberty on Africa. And why should not this prove, in addition to the urgent claims of Africa herself, a powerful incentive to every *American* Christian to make such a political community on the coast the medium through which to spread that glorious gospel whose Dove mounts on a loftier flight and on purer wings than eagles', bearing in its beak the olive-branch of proffered peace from Heaven to man, and diffusing, from every point along its upward, shining way, the light and infinite blessings of that "liberty wherewith Christ maketh free?"

SERMON XI.

“And they sung a new song.”—REV. v. 9.

THE book of Revelation is strikingly distinguished from other parts of the inspired volume. Other portions, both of the Old and New Testaments, contain the history, biography, and prophecy, that pertain to earth. The dealings of God with the patriarchs, His providence over the ancient Church, the illustrious examples of piety that have figured in the moral history of the race, the preparation for and introduction of the Messiah—his life, miracles and doctrines, the precepts of his gospel, the moral condition of man, and his ultimate destiny, together with the predictions of the final and universal triumphs of Christianity, as imbodied in the New Testament form in the world, these are the principal topics on which all the other portions of divine revelation treat. But the Book from which our text is taken, dwells more on the brighter, and blessed economy of heaven. It carries us beyond the limits of earth, and the close of time. It draws aside the veil of the eternal future, and gives us a distant view of the great metropolis of “The King of kings, and Lord of lords.” The spacious city, its resplendent walls and pearly gates, and streets of pure transparent gold, its whole scenery and sunlight, its holy hosts innumerable, in all their triumphs and immortal raptures

of bliss, break upon our awed, yet delighted vision ! The beloved disciple had his mental (perhaps his *bodily*) eye supernaturally assisted to penetrate far into the wonders, and the glories of that mysterious realm which we call heaven ! He saw its multitude of sublime orders of being, he noticed their employment, he heard the accents of their eternal hosannahs, he witnessed their exalted worship, their profound adoration, the glow and seraphic ardour of their love to God, and most of all does he seem to be struck and captivated by the fact which he announces in our text, "And they sung a new song." What must have been the emotions of the exiled Apostle in the solitude of Patmos as he listened to this far off celestial strain ! How overwhelming to the ear, and the heart of a mortal its divine accents ! To him in his lonely longings to be with Christ, *any* song sung by heaven's hosts in the halls, and beneath the dome of God's temple above, would have an ineffable charm. But it seems they had one which had all the blissful excitement of a holy and sublime novelty. We seem to catch something of the overpowering emotions of the beloved disciple, as the numbers of this song fell on his ear, and thrilled through all the chords of his soul ! We can imagine with what exhilaration and emphasis he makes the declaration, "And they sung a *new* song !"

The object of this discourse shall be *to show in what respects this is a NEW* song.

I. The *THEME of this song is new*, it stands alone, there is none like it amidst all the themes of earth and heaven. The theme is revealed to us, in connexion with the text. It is not necessary to invoke

the aid of fancy or conjecture, to ascertain what was the burden of this wondrous song. On this point let us hear with reverence the following utterance of the divine oracles: "And I saw on the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within, and on the back-side, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." "The book" mentioned in these verses, is thought to represent the glorious counsels and pur-

poses of Jehovah, respecting the future destinies of men under the mediatorial reign of Christ on earth, and the consummation of his kingdom in heaven. No *creature* therefore, however exalted his nature or station, could open that book, or loose its seven seals. No created eye could even look into it. How deep the counsels of the infinite God! This book, fraught with the fates of men, and the glorious fortunes of Messiah's empire, would have for ever remained sealed, had not one been found who was worthy and every way competent to take it "out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne," and to loose its awful seals. There is a profound significance in that affirmation of Christ,—"*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, HE hath declared him.*" With all the vast and immortal interests involved in the opening of this book, and the disclosure of its stupendous contents to man, this world, and the whole dominions of God, probably, would have remained ignorant of its revelations, had it not been for the Lamb that was slain. None but He was capable of disclosing the fixed and great laws of God's administration, over the Church and over all the intelligent universe. They are represented here as written in a book, to indicate their uniformity and stability. Now you will observe that it is the infinite excellencies of Jesus Christ, as the great organ of communication between God and man, the expounder of "the deep things" of the divine administration over the church, which constitutes the theme of this song. Is it not a new theme? None ever did or ever will, share the honors of Christ's

position and power in this respect. He stands alone in the peerless dignity and glory of being *worthy* to take the closed book of Jehovah's purposes, and loose its seals. All the holy creation see and feel the commanding grandeur of his act in taking from the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, that mysterious book. They know what great interests of the divine empire are to be promoted by loosing its seals. What glory is to be reflected on God and what good to accrue to the moral creation from this development of the deep counsels of God, and the great and fixed principles of his providence, over the church and the world. And as they gaze on and admire, and adore the Lamb that was slain, they string their harps, and tune their celestial voices, and break forth into singing, "THOU art *worthy* to take the book, and loose the seals thereof."

What a *new* theme for the song of heaven; the dignity, the worth, the glory of Jesus Christ as he unfolds the purposes and grand principles of Jehovah's administration over the church. Amidst the eternal hallelujahs of heaven, there never had been, and there never will be a theme like this. For there is but One Mediator between God and man, but One great Expounder of his infinite counsels, *but* one book of eternal decrees, and but ONE *worthy* to take that book and loose the seals; and his act in doing this will be celebrated for ever, in a *new* song isolated from all the other praises of eternity.

II. This song is *new* in respect to *the vast numbers* that cordially join in it. It is but a limited number that can engage in singing together on earth. Beyond a few thousands, at most, it becomes physi-

cally impossible to participate in this exercise. But the music of heaven is written on a far different scale. The infinite God has made arrangements there for numbers, and harmony, of which at present we can form no conception. The beloved disciple had an awe-inspiring view of *the vast multitude* who sang this new song. Hear *his* thrilling description of the celestial choir: "And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." These numbers are evidently employed, not to designate the *precise* number engaged in this heavenly song, but to convey an overwhelming impression of *the vastness* of the multitude. We have a similar phraseology in one of the psalms, where it is said, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand even" (or many) "thousands of angels." The Scriptures clearly intimate that the number of those beings called angels is very great. In addition to all these, the apostle mentions other orders of the heavenly world as engaged in this song; "the beasts," or living beings, too mighty to receive a name in mortal language, and the elders, another order of celestial existences. Now these alone would constitute an inconceivably great number whose voices are united in this song. But in addition to all these, we know that *all* the redeemed from amongst men are part, also, of that grand choir. Every adult of the human race, from righteous Abel to the last spirit of the just made perfect in glory, swells this number. And we must add to these again, as we seem to be authorized to do, both from the implications of scrip-

ture and the general principles of benevolence, all the infant population of our globe that have died before the age of accountability. Now if bills of mortality may be credited, nearly two-thirds of all past generations have died in infancy. What myriads of *infant* voices swell the rich harmonies of this new song! O! with what a tender and mournfully endearing interest does this thought invest the music of heaven. Christian parents, have you lost from earth, in their infancy, the dear objects of your parental affection? Through the blood of the Lamb, they are all gathered round about the throne, happy songsters in heaven! *They* form a part of that innumerable host, whose voices give accent to the strains of the new song in glory! Now in dilating our thoughts to embrace in one assemblage all the angels, all the mighty and nameless living beings, all the elders, all the adults that have been redeemed from amongst men, and all of our race that have died in infancy, our minds are utterly overmatched with the conception of the vast numbers engaged in that celestial song! Surely it is *new* in respect to the unnumbered and innumerable myriads that utter its immortal harmonies. But after these untold myriads had sung the first strain with a loud voice, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book and loose the seals thereof," then the beloved disciple tells us who joined with them in the grand chorus of this new and wonderful song: "And *every creature* which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and *all* that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the

Lamb for ever and ever!" The wide universe of being, rational and irrational, is here personified and represented as participating in this song, for it celebrates the matchless worth of him who takes the book and looses the seals, and unfolds the great and eternal laws of that benevolent and all-comprehensive providence, which encircles every being, and extends its care to the insect of an hour, not less than to the cherub in his immortality before the throne. What must be the music of such a song!!

That is a beautiful, though perhaps wholly fanciful, speculation of philosophers, which supposes that the revolutions of the multitudes of worlds, in the immensity of space, create sounds, which they call "the music of the spheres." But were this true, and did such music of mighty *material* worlds, actually exist, what would it be compared with the vast numbers, the high intelligence, the lofty theme, and the holy emotions which give character and emphasis to the music of this new song? What is the number of all worlds, compared with the number of all God's creatures—for

"The whole creation join in one,
To bless the sacred name,
Of Him that sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb."

God has made the universe vocal, *all* creatures in all worlds shall have an utterance, for once at least, to swell the strains and give accent to this divine song. In respect to the vast, the almost infinite numbers united in singing its sweet celestial harmonies, this is a *new* song, even amidst the unceasing hosannahs of heaven.

III. There is a divine novelty also in this song, from the fact that *its harmonies are absolutely perfect*. Comparatively few voices on earth can be so combined as to form a complete harmony. And were the organs of vocalization so nearly alike, and the various parts so carefully balanced as to give promise of the best music possible, in our present condition, yet the emotions or states of the singers' minds would necessarily be so various, as to interfere with a full and perfect harmony; for it is a well ascertained fact, that the particular state of the mind greatly influences the voice. Hence, the tones of grief, love, anger, and certain other emotions are peculiar, and easily distinguished. It would indeed be a *new* song on earth, were one sung by any considerable number of voices in perfect harmony. But the song contemplated in our text, *is* new in this respect, that notwithstanding the myriads of different orders of beings engaged in it, its harmony is absolutely perfect. Not one discordant note in all the parts. Every mind is filled with precisely the same emotions, supreme love, adoration, and praise to the Lamb that was slain. No sin is there to unstring the heart and put it out of tune, no baleful passion to ruffle the mind, and communicate harshness to the voice, no rivalry amongst the heavenly choir to repress the full-toned utterance of praise and love, no sorrows to sadden the soul, and extort from it the wail of wo, no fears to damp the divine ardours of the spirit and give tremulousness to the voice, no domestic discord to mar the peaceful flow of sound, no wars nor rumours of wars to embroil and agitate the vast multitudes engaged in this song, no frown of

God to dim their cheerful sunlight, no wave of death to chill one heart, or silence one harp of the innumerable throng, no sigh, no sob, no groan to mingle with this song, or mar its heavenly numbers. Its harmonies are absolutely perfect. The listening ear of God detects no discord. Its sweet accents rise on the air of heaven undisturbed, as though uttered by a single voice, and roll along the track of eternal years in unbroken harmony! It is a *new* song; the only one ever sung by so countless a host of various orders of being, and yet preserving a harmony befitting the music of Jehovah's sanctuary on high!

IV. It is a new song, *because it celebrates the union and coincidence of the great ends attained by the law and the gospel, it is "the song of Moses and the Lamb."* The taking this book, and the opening its seals, disclosed those wise and wonderful counsels, by which God was working out, both in the old dispensation and the new, the same stupendous and eternal results of glory to himself, and good to man. And yet when we gather round Mount Sinai, and witness the darkness, and tempest, and thunders, and the voice of words, and the sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, and hear the stern, uncompromising commands, and the certain and fearful denunciations of the law, and then go to Calvary, and witness its mysteries of gloom and of glory, hear the voice of love and mercy proclaiming pardon, wooing, with an eloquence divine, the guilty wanderer back to God the Saviour, pleading with him to repent and believe, and promising the remission of sins, and the joys of salvation here, and the bliss and the glories of an eternal heaven hereafter, we

do not at once see how these two systems, the law and the gospel, can coincide and co-operate in the attainment of those great ends that are celebrated in the new song of heaven. But such a coincidence does exist, and give a peculiar emphasis to that song. The law reveals the character of God in his irreconcilable hatred of sin, and his inflexible determination to punish it. The gospel in the sacrifice of the Lamb that was slain, magnifies the law in this respect, and makes it honourable, deepening the impression, the very same impression, of the character of God made by the law. The law by its eternal sanctions brings a powerful restraint on the depravity of man, and takes strong hold on the conscience. The precepts of the gospel, pointing to the blood of the Lamb as the expression of *God's* estimate of the magnitude and malignity of sin, (for which this blood is the *only adequate* atonement,) enhances the power of those restraints imposed by the law, and awakens new fears of transgressing whilst it proclaims, "If these things be done in the *green* tree, what shall be done in the *DRY!*" The law convicts of sin, arraigns and condemns the sinner, and cuts him off from all hopes of atoning for its violation by any subsequent good works. At this point where the law leaves him alone in his guilt and condemnation, "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" comes to him with the atoning blood of his well beloved Son, with a justifying righteousness all complete, with sovereign mercy and grace, the influences of the Holy Spirit to regenerate him, the favour of God to adopt him into his great family, and all the grand appliances of the scheme of redemption to effect his ultimate and eter-

nal salvation. And after his submission, and penitence, and faith, and adoption, both the precepts of the law and the gospel take the control of all his actions, and become, under the application of the Holy Spirit, a great instrument of his sanctification and meetness for heaven. "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid." There is a most glorious coincidence and co-operation between the law and the gospel, in effecting those far-reaching and benevolent results, at which God aims in his administrations of providence and grace over the world. But this wonderful coincidence and co-operation, are never fully seen and appreciated here. It is the vast multitude engaged in the new song of heaven, whose piercing vision enables them to penetrate into the deep things of the divine administration, and to see how the very same great moral results are effected by the united action of the law and the gospel. They see those results perfected, and in all their magnitude and celestial grandeur. Hence, to celebrate *the wisdom* of Christ in making these two apparently opposite systems work together for the attainment of ends vast as the manifestations of Jehovah's glory and the eternal happiness of redeemed millions, becomes a part of their immortal song. It is a *new* song, then, because it celebrates the excellencies and perfection of that very law, with which sinners in this world, and the world of wo, are maintaining a most deadly quarrel, and recognises its coincidence with the blessed gospel in effecting the grand purposes of God's government in the happiness of the universe.

V. It is a *new* song, because it celebrates com-

PLETED *redemption*. This is the very point of the reason assigned in our text, why Christ was worthy to take the book and loose its seals. "And they sung a new song, saying, *Thou* art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof, FOR *Thou* wast slain, and *hast redeemed us to God*, by Thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings, and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." Here the price of redemption, the precious blood of Christ, and that redemption consummated in heaven, are presented as the burden of this new and wondrous song. And this constitutes it a *new* song, for no such event as *finished* salvation is celebrated any where but in heaven. The song of redeeming grace, is in one sense new, and it is sung here by the soul in the first joys of its conversion. But it celebrates only the *commencement* of the reign of Christ in the heart. It is the song that animates to the conflict, and urges to spiritual attainment, not the triumphant strains of victory and full fruition. Its sweet notes are often interrupted by the groans of a captivity to the law of sin and death. Its music is often exchanged for the voice of lamentation over the remaining depravity of the heart. The occasional prevalence of temptation and sin, the trials and sorrows of life, and the hardships of the Christian warfare, often for a season suspend it altogether. It is a "song in the night" of the Christian's pilgrimage, a song inspired more by the hope of what is yet future, than by what is already in possession. It celebrates the conquest of sovereign grace over the heart, and the occasional victories gained over the

world, the flesh, and the Devil, as the Christian advances in the divine life; yet, as already intimated, its sweetest accents refer to what he hopes to be, and to enjoy in the future. Widely different from this is the song spoken of in our text. It celebrates *completed* redemption. It looks back from heaven to Calvary to catch its glowing inspirations from the blood that was shed there, and to sing *the present, completed* triumphs of the great atonement. "For Thou wast slain, and *hast* redeemed us to God by Thy blood." The blessed work is actually completed, "*it is finished.*" The temptations, trials, conflicts, sorrows, and separations from God that mark this state of probation, are all past and gone for ever. Sin has lost entirely its long waning dominion in the soul. Death's work on all that was mortal in the Christian is over. He has left this inconstant world with its alternate light and shade, its conflicting hopes and fears, far and for ever behind. The process of his sanctification so long in progress by the working together of all things for his good, is now perfected. Without spot, blameless and unreprouable in love before God, he now stands beholding Jesus as he is, and being like Him, his redemption fully consummated. This is the mighty theme of all the unnumbered multitudes redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. They sing the wonders, the ineffable glories, of their *perfected* salvation! All that God had promised, and more than hope ever grasped, they now realize. They sing not of bright, though distant anticipations. They utter their own *present* blissful experience of *finished redemption* through the blood of the Lamb.

What a blissful song! Is it not *new*? Is there any thing like it sung by the inhabitants of any other world, in God's wide dominions? Not only finished redemption, redemption terminating in the eternal transports of a soul made perfect in holiness, and presented before God, but a redemption wrought out by the travail and tragic agony of Him who was slain, and purchased it with his own precious blood.

What wonder that the notes of such a song bursting on the air of heaven, should be borne down to earth, and greet the ear of the exiled disciple amidst the solitude of that desert isle, whither, for the testimony of Jesus, he was banished! "And they sung a new song," new, because it couples the atonement of Calvary with the perfected salvation of the just in heaven, and celebrates the splendid achievements of the *second* Adam over all the tremendous ruins of the first. O grant that my soul may kindle with the raptures of that song, and my voice yet mingle in its sublime harmonies, I ask no heaven besides!!

VI. And *lastly*—It is a new song, because, unlike all others, *it will NEVER END*. That high-wrought emotion which gives birth to poetry and music, constitutes a state of mind so far above its ordinary level, that, in the nature of the case, it cannot last long. The human voice also, in the present state, is incapable of any very protracted exercise. Even the sweetest song of the Christian, while here below, must soon be brought to a close. There is no joyous melody on earth, but is short-lived. In this, as well as in other respects, "the fashion of this world passeth away." The ear is scarcely greeted and gladdened by the charms of song, till the sound dies

away, and is remembered only as a dream. How different is the new song of heaven! All the voices engaged in it, are *immortal*. The hearts in which the melodies of that song are made, are strong *undying* hearts. The *theme* of that song is changeless, and *everlasting*. The bliss of that song is a *permanent part* of the bliss of heaven. The utterance of its rich and flowing harmonies, is by that "voice of many waters," whose tides shall never ebb, but rise and roll onward with an accumulating swell by a fixed law of the celestial economy. He to whom its lofty praises are directed, "liveth and reigneth for ever." His excellencies which it celebrates, are immutable and eternal. Why then should such a song ever cease? It never will, for it is said of those who constitute the grand orchestra of heaven, and peal forth the rapturous melodies of that song, that "they rest not day nor night." They have minds capable of sustaining for ever the mighty emotions that give birth to its poetry and its music. They have voices that know no fatigue by incessant exercise. They have an atmosphere to perpetuate its sounds, which no storms ever agitate, and an ear to listen to its holy strains, that can never grow weary or dull. This song then stands alone and new in this respect, that it *will be eternal*. It began long since, and has never suffered the diminution of one voice that was ever engaged in its sweet accents. Each redeemed spirit, as it enters heaven, catches the inspiration and re-echoes the strain. And, after the judgment of the great day, when the ultimate order of God's administration over the holy shall be settled for ever, this new song will receive a new em-

phasis, and a new impulse, and the vast universe will take it up then as the grand hallelujah chorus to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, "world without end."

The practical inference most obviously deducible from this subject is, that God reveals this new song of heaven to our world, *to allure his people to awake and prepare now for participating soon hereafter in its blissful numbers.* Dear Christian friends, have we a state of heart at present that is gladdened by the distant notes of this song, and that leads us to long for the hour when, away from the turmoil and discord of earth, we shall join its exalted strains? O! are we living in such communion with God, in such fervours of love to the Saviour, in such a spirit of importunate prayer, with such a zeal for the glory of God, such compassion for souls, such holy longings for the purity and the bliss of heaven, that we are ready, waiting, *eager* to seize our golden harps and tune our voices for this new song? Would to God we *were*, for then would our captivity be turned, our desolations repaired, and we be girded anew for all the noble doings and darings of Christian heroism in the good fight of faith. Yes, "the joy of the Lord is the strength of his people." The music of heaven is the true martial inspiration for our spiritual warfare. Think not, my hearers, that I have presented this subject to you, merely to gratify that instinctive love that we possess, to hear glowing descriptions of the bliss of heaven, or for the purpose of employing your imaginations in vague excursions through those beatific realms revealed to the faith, and compassed as a vivid reality by the hopes of the

devout Christian. No, I have presented it under a deep conviction, that Christians not only lose much comfort, but are often greatly dispirited and disqualified for the battlings of the good soldier, by not fixing the eye of faith more frequently and steadfastly on the bright and glorious scenes of an eternal heaven. How different the impulse to every duty, how different the support in every trial, and the courage in every conflict derived from the shinings of an opening heaven, and the song of its glad hosannahs, compared with the influence of mere habit, slavish fear, or cold convictions of the judgment, or understanding! Believe me, my Christian friends, should God in his providence place and hold you, by a precarious state of health, for a length of time in the vicinity of the eternal world, and should he rouse your faith to grasp its invisible realities, and should he graciously brighten your hopes of an unfading crown, and an everlasting kingdom in heaven, you will then be able to appreciate the emphatic truth of the declaration, that no impulsive power for good ever gathers such energies on the human soul, as that derived from a bright and assured hope of glory. O! to mount as on wings of eagles above the clouds and noise of earth, to have our vision filled and glowing with the resplendent objects of that upper world, our ear greeted with its songs and shouts of victory, and our hearts melted and dilated with the infinite ardours of its love, then would we be fitted for those heroic deeds of faith, and those holy triumphs of Christian hope that will bring us off more than conquerors from the great spiritual battle-field of our probation, more than victors over death and the grave.

SERMON XII.

“But one sinner destroyeth much good.”—Ec. ix. 18.

THE influence which a certain description of moral character exerts on the world, is a subject of deep and thrilling interest. That God should have permitted human beings to exercise so great a control over each other's allotments here, and their destinies hereafter, is one of the inexplicable things in the present economy. That there should be such importance as the Scriptures attach to the character, and such remote and incalculable consequences connected with the actions of so limited a creature as man, seems almost incredible. Hence, the good man is often prone to think that if he have faith, it is literally “to himself and God” alone—that his character as a Christian is connected with no results other than those which he shall experience in his own individual case, either in this or in his future life. But, in the verses preceding the text, the gifted and divinely inspired Solomon corrects this misapprehension, and shows that “wisdom”—that is, true piety—“is better than weapons of war.” He drew this inference from a fact which he had previously stated, namely, that a city had been delivered from a most appalling siege by the wisdom or piety of “*one poor man!*” We have thus the grave truth disclosed to us, that in the wonderful

scheme of God's government over the world results far beyond the most splendid triumphs of military prowess or the combined force of physical appliance can spring from the character and conduct of one obscure righteous man. Therefore "wisdom is better than weapons of war." But it is the sinner in his career of crime who feels least responsibility for the consequences of his conduct. Indeed, that very *thoughtlessness* which cannot be made to pause and consider the influence and issues of his actions is one of the most *characteristic traits* of the sinner. What task more hopeless than to attempt to infix upon his soul the conviction that with every step he takes in sin, there may be disastrous results which shall yet spread themselves out, wide as the world he now inhabits, and be as enduring as the eternity to which he hastens! Make the attempt, and the sinner will tell you with the utmost candour that he *means nothing* by his wickedness—that he has no disposition to harm one of human kind or to spread mischief and misery in the empire of God; nor can he believe, that he, only one of nine hundred millions of men could, were he to try, do much injury to the cause of virtue and happiness in the world. His practical language is—"many sinners do not destroy much good." But a greater than he hath said in our text—"One sinner destroyeth much good." "*Destroyeth* much good"—not *may* destroy—the declaration is both positive and absolute. He is not only *capacitated* to destroy, but does *actually* destroy much good. This he does either by his character and habitual conduct counteracting those causes operating to produce

good, or by putting in train directly those causes that will eventuate in the production of immense mischief. The consideration of a few great general principles in the moral philosophy of fallen man, will illustrate and prove the truth of our text.

I. *All the relations of man in the present world are so arranged as to advance him from a less to a greater degree of virtue, if he is righteous, or of vice, if he is an habitual sinner.* This arrangement is both wise and benevolent; suited admirably to the nature of man, as a moral agent in a state of discipline and probation. It was not made originally, that men might have a facility by these relations to advance in vice and crime, but in virtue and benevolence. It is man's character and spirit *as a sinner* which pervert all his relations and render their admirable arrangement the means of that fearful progression in vice that arms him with so stupendous a power of mischief. In order to estimate this power of one sinner, let us follow him in his criminal career through the ascending series of his relations and the widening spheres of influence which they open to him in the present world. Let us take him in the simplest relation of his existence,—that of mere childhood in the nursery, and see whether even *here* the buddings of his power to destroy much good are not manifest. Does not his spirit of disobedience, his wilfulness and obstinacy, his restiveness under control and the bursts of his temper here indulged tend to destroy a mother's equanimity, to produce habits of irritability, and to disqualify her for the calm and consistent performance of her maternal duties? These baleful pas-

sions in a less or greater degree of development and exercise will characterize the one sinner, though so young as not yet to have gone beyond the threshold of the nursery, and they will be efficiently destructive of much good that would otherwise have existed in the temper and habits of parents.

Let us contemplate him again advanced to the relation of boyhood, and coupled by it to a number of young associates, and what a power of destruction will his spirit and conduct as a sinner wield at this period over their unsettled and pliable moral feelings. *The companionship* of early life, when the principle of imitation acts so powerfully, exerts a greater and more decisive influence in the formation of character than any other given circumstance. Let this one, young sinner, then, be familiar with that reproach of youth,—that most gratuitous and vulgar vice—profane swearing; and how much good will he destroy, by weakening in the minds of his youthful companions that reverence for the name and the attributes of God in which they have been educated. One guilty hour of his profaneness may *annihilate* in the minds of his young associates that “fear of an oath” which has cost parents and religious teachers the labour of years to produce. And this annihilation of the fear of God, this upheaval and throwing off of one of the most powerful restraints on juvenile depravity, gives scope and play to a multitude of destructive agencies in the young mind hitherto held in check. It uncages the baleful passions, and sends them prowling, unawed, through the ranks of youthful society. Now, so crowded as is the young population of most countries, and so

strong as is the associating principle at this period, who can compute the number of youthful minds with which this one young, profane sinner will come in contact, and on whom he will exert this form of blighting influence? Take, then, the whole number of cases in which he has destroyed this single feeling of reverence for the name of God, and then multiply by the number and force of all those other sins to which freedom from this form of restraint has given rise, and say whether one sinner in a limited relation does not destroy much good.

It deserves to be noticed here, also, that the very same kind of influence exerted in this one instance of profane swearing is attributable, in all its length and breadth, to all that number and variety of evil actions which constitute the character and permanent example of the young sinner. Let him enstamp on the imagination of a youthful companion an obscene image, and lay the foundation for trains of polluted association, and can any finite mind compute the mischief thus effected? So, his disregard of parental authority, his disrespect to superiors, his folly and recklessness, his contempt for the good opinion of the virtuous, his callousness at wounding the feelings of others, his envy and evil-speaking, his malice and early attempts at vengeance and retaliation of injuries, all tell with the same efficient destructiveness on the forming habits and pliant feelings of his youthful associates!

We may next contemplate this one sinner in the *relation of manhood*. All his powers are now fully developed, and a *mature intensity* given to his evil moral qualities which they did not possess

before. He has the aggregated strength of *confirmed habits* of sin. Much *practice* has given him tact, and taught him a *compendious mode* of doing evil. This relation greatly enlarges the sphere of his blasting influence. It involves the relation of superiority in years over all that younger part of society with whom we have hitherto contemplated him as on an equality, whilst his *present* equality is with the entire multitudes in manhood around him. Here then, you perceive, he has an almost unlimited sway over the young, who look up to him as their superior in age and in knowledge, whilst he has a new and extended influence over his present equals in the period of manhood. He is no longer confined to the narrow circle of his boyish companions, nor to the limited routine of juvenile action. He is connected now with that portion of society subject to most mutation, where *his* mind is brought into contact with other minds in constant and quick succession. His facilities of communication with his fellows are such that he is perpetually enlarging the sphere of his destructive operations, and multiplying the radiating points of his malignant influence. Now, over this wide and widening field he is spreading out the peculiarities of his character as a sinner, which, by seizing on the great laws of sympathy and assimilation in the hearts of his fellow men, are dealing a most signal and unsparing destruction over "whatsoever is lovely and of good report" there. And who may tell what confirmed prejudices against the truth—what latitudinous sentiments—what contempt for the laws of God and man—what opiates of conscience—what settled,

hardened skepticism—what confirmed enmity to God and all that is good may take the place of better feelings in the hearts of thousands, by the influence of this one sinner, in ten years of the vigour of manhood? What “fire-brands, arrows, and death” has he strewn over the whole length of his guilty pathway! What blight and mildew has he left on the morals of all with whom he has been in contact! What wasting and desolation, more terrible than of the whirlwind and the earthquake, mark his criminal career!

But let us now contemplate this “one sinner” advanced in age, in the relation in which “three score and ten” places him. At this period a superficial observer might suppose that his power of destroying much good was greatly diminished. He is now consigned by his age to comparative retirement and inactivity. But man’s social principle is not destroyed by the lapse of years. At every period of life he loves society, and will have it. And the change from that portion of society in manhood and middle life to that of old age is so gradual and imperceptible, that the veteran of seventy still finds himself in congenial company, unaltered in all the peculiarities of his spirit and character as a sinner. He has those that are his equals and his fellows *now*, no less than were those of his boyhood and maturity. And though, in his physical constitution, he bears the marks of wasted vigour and wrecked animal energies, yet his enmity against God is strong as ever, and the habit of sinning, and all his powers of destroying much good, have suffered nothing from the changes and chances of time, or the debility and

decrepitude of age. If those of his own years, with whom he now associates, be *fewer* than those who surrounded him when young and gay, his influence on such is more certainly and effectively destructive; because his aged companions will not, in the nature of the case, have the same length of time to retrace their evil course which the young may. The old already live in the vicinity of the judgment-seat, and have advanced within a step of the irreversible awards of eternity. Besides, they have arrived at that advanced point in the formation of character when a single shade or two added is all that is necessary to *finish* the dark picture of their depravity, *complete* their education in sin, and *graduate* them for a miserable immortality! If, then, there be fewer materials for him to operate on, they have a *greater adaptation* to the aged sinner's work of destruction. But is it correct to estimate the number as *few* in whose hearts one *aged* sinner may destroy much good? No. His influence now extends over *all* the gradations of society through which he has passed. His advance to new and higher relations have not destroyed any of the others. For instance, will not a profane oath, sanctioned by the gray hairs, and trembling limbs, and toothless articulation of age, more effectually destroy the fear of God in a child than the profaneness of a young companion? Children, till taught otherwise by experience and observation, always associate the idea of the becoming and the correct with the conduct of the aged. Why, then, may not the crowds of giddy youth be indoctrinated and confirmed in their carelessness, stupidity, and practical atheism, when they

see the man of three-score and ten as utterly reckless as themselves?—see him, when he has one foot already on that narrow isthmus which divides this from the eternal world, as insensible as though there were no God, no final doom, no ruined eternity for the incorrigible sinner! Yea, one *aged* sinner will exert a destructive influence over the minds and morals of youth beyond the power of hundreds of their own age; because the young, by a strange delusion, uniformly contemplate advanced age as the appropriate and favourable period for the exercises of piety, and the aged as *patterns* of serious thoughtfulness and preparation for the world to come. And further, may not the busy and bustling crowds of *manhood* and *middle age* learn a lesson of absorbing attachment to the world, and of sordid avarice, from the aged sinner who, tottering on his crutches, toils and struggles on through schemes of gain, and whose withered heart still beats high with the love of gold, even when its muscular strength is scarcely sufficient to propel the slow current of life along its channels. Thus it is manifest that one aged sinner destroys much good over all the gradations of society, from the child up to the few of gray hairs with himself, who are glad to add him to their number, that there may be one more to divide with them the responsibility of a misspent life, and of hoary-headed impenitence!

It is but justice to the subject to introduce in this estimate an item that has been hitherto omitted; that is, the amount of good which this one sinner has destroyed by destroying the hopes and happiness of his own soul—that soul whose worth mocks

the wealth of worlds, and is written in the blood of the great atonement, and whose weight can be balanced only by that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which would have been his, had he not destroyed himself by his iniquities. Think of the number of souls with whom he came in contact while yet young, and on whom, when yielding as the wax is to the seal, he exerted his destructive influence as a sinner! Think, again, of the still greater number of souls, in the period of manhood, on whom he brought to bear all his matured agencies of evil, wasting their moral strength, and making their bonds of iniquity strong upon them, and strengthening their hands in sin, and urging them to the same excesses with himself by his counsel and example, and all the tremendous power of his spirit and character as a sinner. Think, too, of the number of aged wrecks with whom he consorted when old, and who required but one blow even of his shrivelled arm to dash them in moral ruin: and forget not to take into the account here, that two *new* generations of children and men in their meridian have sprung up since those with whom *he* used to be associated have passed away, and that over these, as well on those once the immediate companions of his age, he is rolling back the destructive tide of his power, and then say, my hearers, does not one sinner destroy much good?

But I beg you to notice that in this estimate of the sinner's power to do harm, we have contemplated him only in his most general relations as a member of society—merely as one of the multitude—without sustaining any particular relation, involv-

ing in its very nature a destructive influence more direct and unbroken, than that which he exercised by his *occasional* intercourse with his fellow-men.

Let us now, in *addition* to the appalling amount of good which he has destroyed *in this way*, contemplate him in the relations of a *husband* and *father*. His partner may also be a sinner, but may not be so callous, and so profoundly at ease as he, in view of sustaining such a character in the sight of a holy God! On some occasion, it may be when she has been to the sanctuary on the Sabbath, the divine word has come with pungency and power to her conscience and her heart. She has returned to her home in sadness and in tears. She has sought an opportunity of being alone with her Bible and her God. But with the sagacity of a fiend, her husband suspects the cause of her sorrow, breaks in upon her retirement, and there, by the power of ridicule, or by a false appeal to her love for him, or in the sternness of his authority as a husband, he plies every susceptibility of her nature that is adapted to impel her to abandon the concerns of her soul. He tells her, it is religious melancholy, superstitious gloom, to feel as she does, and that *continuing* to feel thus, their wedded happiness must speedily come to an end, and his affections be alienated from her! By his constant intercourse with her, he reiterates these arguments and efforts, till, in utter discouragement, she dismisses her last resolve to secure the soul's salvation, grieves away the Spirit of God, and becomes seared and insensible as her destroyer. And now, in his relation as a father, with a partner thus conformed, by his fearful

power of persuasion, in sinful character to himself, what will be his destructive influence on their children, whose moral feelings are modelled almost exclusively after the pattern of their father, to whom, in the simple confidence of their young hearts, they look up as their *guide* and *exemplar* in every virtue. His character as a sinner is making its deep and enduring impressions on them, with all the facilities afforded by *their* young, susceptible, confiding hearts, and *his* constant contact with them in the authority, reverence, obedience, and all the filial affection due from them to him, in the endeared relation of a father. How readily will his weight of influence, bearing with unintermitted pressure, for the first ten or fifteen years, on the opening and plastic minds of his children, *crush out* from them the *last feeling* of the fear of God which lingered and struggled for existence there! Then, while this one sinner has had a *divided* or *diluted* influence in destroying much good in the souls of multitudes, with whom he met in his *social* intercourse, over the companion of his life, and the children whom God hath given him, he has wielded a *certain* destruction, ALL HIS OWN. That husband and father will “not perish ALONE in his iniquity!!”

AGAIN.—In this estimate of one sinner’s power to destroy much good, in no respect have we considered him as having a *peculiar* or commanding influence above others. He has been supposed to belong to the thousands, in the ordinary and unobserved walks of life. But let us now behold him in the adventitious relations of *rank*, *wealth*, and *education*, and mark how his facilities for destroy-

ing much good, over every department of society, are thus multiplied. How much more extensively is he *known* amongst all classes! How many minions, and pitiful parasites, flatterers, and feigned admirers, will his rank and riches obtain for him, and bring under the sway of his influence as a sinner! What multitudes, who cannot or *will* not think for themselves, will give an easy credence to the crude and contradictory dogmas of his infidel creed, because he has the reputation of an educated gentleman. What multitudes of his equals, will his leisure, and his facilities of travelling, and of social intercourse, bring within the potent sweep of his destructive influence! The factitious splendour which station, honours, wealth, and education give, even to the *vices* of their possessors, and the servile imitation of those vices, by almost all classes, are facts too notorious to require comment. Now, you will perceive, that one sinner of this character, has a power of destroying much good, which not only extends over the same *length*, from youth up to old age, but has an *additional*, and almost indefinite BREADTH, denied to his obscure, and less gifted fellow in crime. Assuredly, then, if one private, unlettered sinner, can destroy his thousands, this sinner, in his rank, and honours, his wealth, and learned leisure, can destroy his *tens* of thousands! And, suppose further, that this one sinner has a highly gifted, richly stored mind, and holds to the public the relation of an *author*, and sheds over his skeptical and licentious pages the inspiration and the charm of *real genius*! Now, with such facilities of printing, and such an immense, and ever-widen-

ing circle of readers as characterize our day, it is obvious, that as an author, he can have a kind of contact and communion with a multitude of minds, whom, with all his facilities of an extended personal acquaintance, the arm of his destructive power could never have reached. The solitary individual of real genius, who employs *the press* to embody, and send abroad the peculiarities of his character as a sinner, may live in a ubiquitous energy to destroy much good over the length and the breadth of the whole civilized world. How many licentious skeptics did Hume, and Gibbon, and some of their weak imitators, and wicked admirers make, in their own day, though these authors themselves, may have, long since, been taught in a most summary manner, to "*believe and tremble!*" What mighty desolations were wrought in the moral feelings of multitudes, by the works of Lord Byron, while they were still wet from the press, and sought after, as they were, with the cravings of a morbid appetite, whet to unnatural acuteness, by the delay of each expected volume! How much mad misanthropy, sickly sensibility, dark, and defying skepticism, unbridled passion, and remorseless lust, may have usurped the place of better feelings in the bosoms of his unnumbered readers, Omniscience only can compute! How many youth have been hopelessly corrupted, by that one editorial sinner, who projected the plan of publishing "Don Juan," in a separate form, lest the *whole* works of the noble bard might be too expensive to ensure an easy and wide circulation! What an awful triumph have these two small volumes, thus sent forth, achieved over the restraints of purity

and youthful virtue. They have taught the young, that the sacredness of wedded chastity may be violated without remorse!—and this lesson has been impressed on their imagination, with all the wit and charms which the genius of a Byron could impart to the successful adventures of the young adulterer, who is the hero of his song, and has been “burnt in upon their memory,” by the immortal fires of his poetry. Verily, my hearers, one sinner who is an author, or even a compiler and publisher, may destroy an immeasurable amount of good, beyond that which he will destroy in the sphere of his own *social* influence.

Allied to this kind of power, to destroy much good, is that with which *the relation of public and important offices invests the sinner*. Let him be a barrister, perverting his office to the purpose of litigation, and defending fraud and crime, by “making the worse appear the better reason;”—or let him be a chief justice on the bench, “turning judgment away backward,” causing to be recorded, as *precedents*, his iniquitous decisions, confounding the distinctions of right and wrong, conniving at vice, and setting up villany on high, under the sanctions of the supreme law—and what a destruction of all respect for law itself, and of all regard for the rights of others, and of all reverence for the eternal principles of justice, will he thus effect in the hearts of thousands, to say nothing of the weight which his office in itself will give to his example as a *sinner*, in the daily walks of private life! Or let this one sinner occupy a high place in the councils or cabinet of a nation; and if he be a master

spirit, thoroughly versed in modern politics, what wholesale havoc of good over the extent of the nation, will be effected by the power of a selfish and cunning diplomacy, or a reckless and mad partisan legislation. And then his morals and every peculiarity of his character as a sinner, are rendered more efficiently destructive on others, by the adventitious charms in which the mere height of his office displays him, and by that blind and superstitious reverence which the multitude in every nation feel towards those who are exalted to the control of their political interests, and destinies. How much wrangling, caning, duelling, Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, and debauchery, have been diffused through this country, the last few years, by the example of some members of congress. Within the last twenty years, a blow has been struck by some of the highest civil functionaries against the political integrity, the national morality, and public virtue, which has destroyed more good than the best and brightest examples in those high places will repair for a century to come!

In illustrating our subject, we are justified in taking the strongest cases of individual power for mischief which the history of the world presents. Let this one sinner, then, be the enthroned despot of a mighty nation, invested with an absolute supremacy over its civil and religious interests and destinies, and during a short reign, what a plenitude of power to destroy much good will he possess. Like Nero, he can with all despatch, not merely bring to the verge of ruin the temporal interests of an empire, but kill the prophets, scatter the people, an

dig down the altars of the living God, over the extent of his dominions. By his own arbitrary, unchecked will, he can protect and *patronise* individual and *national crime*.

Or, let this one sinner be high in *military office*, let him be an Alexander or a Bonaparte, travelling like them “in the greatness of his strength,” on the dark march of his ambition, rolling up and lashing into fury the wrathful and malignant passions of more than half the population of the world, trampling out of unnumbered minds all just estimate of the worth and the sacredness of human life, and sending, prematurely, a countless host from the blood of the battle ground, in *the blood-guiltiness* of their souls, to the bar of God!! Our spirits sink within us, as we contemplate the good which one *such* sinner can destroy in a short career, and within the limits of his own official influence. But if these examples of civil and military characters high in office, should seem to be invidious, then, let this one sinner be clothed with the sacred office of an ambassador of Christ, let him be an *unconverted* minister! How shall we estimate *his* power of destroying much good! To give scope and energy to *his* capabilities of mischief, he can invoke the aid of all the imposing solemnities and awful insignia of his commission as “a legate of the skies.” To give currency and credence to his errors and latitudinarian sentiments, to transfer his own convictions to other minds, and transfuse through them his own spirit, to warp their consciences, and model their hearts after his own fashion, he can avail himself of the tremendous power, not only of the religious

principle, but of all those deep-rooted and hallowed associations connected with the administrations of the altar and of the sanctuary of God! Indeed, it is from this source that the vices of his private life draw their most deep and damning influence. And if he have an uncommon share of the fires of original genius, he may electrify that great chain of moral sympathy which will communicate a destructive shock to the most remote dwellers in Christendom!! No other office clothes a sinner with so terrific a power of destroying much good as this! He has fire from heaven of such intensity as to consume a holocaust of victims as a sacrifice to his depravity. He has weapons of celestial temper, and of fearful capacity to destroy, when wielded by *his* hand as a sinner in holy orders. He perverts the very "sword of the Spirit" into an implement of eternal death to souls!! O! what is the power of a Machiavelli in diplomacy, or of a Nero on the throne, or an Alexander and a Bonaparte with the *world* as a battlefield, compared with his who uses the holy office of the ministry with all its deep and incalculable influences on man, as the means of driving souls from this world of probation, into the perdition of an eternal hell!

But in order to present the truth that one sinner destroyeth much good, in a still more appalling light, we must now notice a

II. Great general principle in the philosophy of fallen man, that is, *the certain inter-communication, or easy and rapid diffusion of evil in our world.* No contagion is so *rapidly* diffusive as the contagion of folly, "because the physical constitu-

tion of fallen man is in direct sympathy with those passions which most readily manifest themselves in the features, the attitude, the action, the language, the tone of voice, the turn of a hand;” hence, every human face becomes a medium of transmission and diffusion, for we cannot but be moved more or less by what we witness of feeling in others; so that the whole surface of society, in many of its phases, becomes, in the propagation of vice, what an *epidemic constitution of atmosphere* is in the spread of literal disease. Let this principle be borne in mind in the subsequent remarks under this head.

Now, we have hitherto considered the sinner’s power of destruction as extending *only* to those with whom he came in actual contact, either personally or by his writings. But this is a defective estimate, for each one with whom the sinner through life comes in contact, and on whom he makes a destructive impression, has also *his* individual and separate sphere of influence over numbers unknown to the first; and his pursuits, and the ever-shifting fortunes of the world, may carry him over large portions of it where the first has never travelled. Thus, a single infidel taunt or jeer against religion, or a solitary obscene anecdote, told by one sinner in a moment of thoughtless mirth to an individual companion, may be repeated in all its damning effect to *multitudes* with whom that one sinner has had no personal communication. And these multitudes, in *their* turn, all forming separate starting points, from each of which this accursed influence may radiate over other multitudes. Thus it goes on by a kind of geometrical progression, which ter-

minates at last in a comparative infinity! From the extreme susceptibility of evil impression by the depraved heart, and the strong bias in favour of sin from taste and habit, it would seem as though there were *a great law of moral contagion*, by which one solitary sinner might infect the world! "The whole world lieth in wickedness." There is a sin that is said to set on fire the course of nature. The world of iniquity is as fuel sun-dried and heated to the point of combustion, and only requiring a spark of unhallowed fire to kindle it into a blaze over the whole extent, with a rapidity and universality like that which we picture of the final conflagration!! Hence, it is apparent, that the good, much as it is, which one sinner destroys by his own *immediate* influence, bears no more proportion to *the whole amount* destroyed by him through this great principle of the inter-communication, or easy diffusion of evil, than the first ripple of the water immediately round the stone thrown into it, does to the sweep of those far extending circles which go on widening their circumferences over the unresisting surface long after the centre has become calm.

It will enhance our conceptions of the amazing power of one sinner to destroy much good, if we

III. Advert here to *a third* great general principle in the philosophy of depraved human nature, namely, *the continuous descent*, or *protracted transmission of evil* through successive ages of the world. You will now call to mind the fact, that in all the preceding remarks it has been assumed that the sinner's power of destruction, however *widely diffused*, *continued* no longer than during his own

life-time, and that of his cotemporaries. But this is by no means the limit of his influence, particularly in the case of one sinner who is a successful and celebrated author, or whose exalted station and office have given him a prominence in history. There is a *great law of descent*, as well as of the easy and wide diffusion of evil, by which its *transmission* from generation to generation goes onward and still onward indefinitely. The *inherited* and *traditionary* evil now in the world, forms a subject of strange and appalling speculation! There may be a sinner in this house to-day, who, if he could analyze critically, and trace to their ultimate sources, all those influences which have concurred to destroy much good in his soul, might find that one sinner back in the dark ages, in the eighth or ninth century, had struck a blow which reached him at this distance! Yes, the last murderer executed, pursuing a similar analysis and investigation, might find that a part of the complicated influences that determined him on the foul deed, was a certain impression made by the character of *Cain himself*, and neither washed out by the deluge, nor obliterated by any of the revolutions and vicissitudes of subsequent time!! This may seem strained, startling, and incredible. But is it not a fact indisputable, that *we* are now distinctly affected by the conduct of the *first transgressor*, and that, too, *not* solely on the ground of a divine constitution or federal relationship between Adam and his posterity, but also by that great law of the transmission of evil from mind to mind, which, when not controlled by special divine influence, is just as uniform and incessant in its opera-

tion, as are the immutable laws of nature. However, languages, and arts, and literature, and governments, and manners, may change, the minds of every preceding generation influence for good or for evil the minds of the one that succeeds it. In the whole history of man did a generation ever spring up and display a moral character in no wise modified or influenced by the one immediately preceding? Now if this cannot be, as all will admit, you perceive, then, that through *every generation*, onward for ever, the chain of communication must remain complete and unbroken, save in those insulated cases of *divine* interference, which form *the exceptions only* to the general rule.

Hence, after all the terrific power with which we have hitherto considered this one sinner invested, we now find him reaching forth a mysterious might, by which, through this great law of the *transmission* of evil, he is capable of carrying on most effectively, the work of destruction commenced while living, long ages after he shall have received his eternal doom!! He may thus "stretch out a line of desolation over many" future "generations." His mischief has been concerned more especially with the faculty by which the mind establishes associations that regulate the currents of thought, and it thus tends to raise and roll on a tremendous tide of destruction, which will never be stayed, nor find its level, till it pass the bounds of time, and mingle in the stormy lake of death and hell. And this leads me to advert briefly to a

IV. Great general principle in the philosophy of fallen man, that gives the climax to the sinner's

power of destroying much good, which is, *the irrevocable or reverseless character* that pertains to evil actions. A destruction, however great, that can be repaired, is not to be compared, in real magnitude, with one much smaller in itself, which is utterly and absolutely *irreparable*. And such, emphatically, is the good destroyed by one sinner. The destruction of one virtuous sentiment in an immortal mind, if God interfere not, will be as lasting as the existence of that mind. And even where a glorious divine sovereignty overrules human wickedness for good, it is not by re-creating the precise good destroyed, or by annihilating the evil act done. That remains, and will remain, an evil act done, as reverseless as final doom. The precise good destroyed in a given case, will remain a blot on the moral map of the universe, a blight on the beauty of the intelligent creation through all eternity! We speak with reverence, when we say that it is not a legitimate object of the power of God himself to render it otherwise! The greatest of living preachers, in his day, once said, that "the wheels of nature were not made to roll backward." So sin and its destructive tendency are changeless and returnless as the course of nature, and will be endless as the circle of eternal years.

Now, in making up the mighty aggregate of good which one sinner destroys through the medium of all his relations, social, domestic, public, political; his relations of wealth, learning, office, and station perverted; all that he destroys through the great principle of the easy and rapid diffusion of evil; through the fixed law of the perpetual and unbroken

descent of evil over *all* generations, just remember that it is the good of *immortal souls* that is destroyed, and then add to it all this awful attribute of *irrevocability*, this sure seal of *an everlasting REVERSELESSNESS!* and we may lift up our hands in awe, and exclaim, "Let God be true, though every man be a liar," for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it—"One sinner destroyeth much good!!"

To conclude. This subject gives us an overwhelming view of *the responsibility* of those who sustain the character of *sinner*s under the government of God. Sinner, settle it in your heart, that it is an unspeakably solemn thing to have an existence in a scene like this, and to have *your* character and conduct inseparably linked with the eternal results of those moral causes that have diffused and perpetuated evil in our world!! Let it never for a moment hereafter, escape your memory that the influence of your character as a sinner, is not confined merely to *your own* destiny in this or in the future world. You are connected with your species by the sympathies of a common nature, and bound up with them in an economy of such mutual influences, that the character of your mind in its voluntary wickedness, will stamp its evil impression on other minds with as fixed and absolute certainty as heavy bodies gravitate! It is vain for you to complain of such a divine constitution, or to attempt to gainsay or resist it. You can never escape from those fixed and eternal laws of mental action and influence which arise from the very nature of spirit. When you think of yourself as only one of the hundred millions of the race, your existence may seem

unimportant as the drop in the midst of the ocean. But, in the great balance of the physical universe, is there even one drop in the ocean unimportant? Were one drop changed or annihilated, might it not produce a change in the relative position of all the minute particles that form that world of waters? And how do you know that one solitary sinful act of yours may not disturb the balance and perpetuate a jar in the nicely adjusted elements of the moral universe for ever? I pray, then, that not one of you lose sight of yourself as an individual in the myriad multitudes of the race with which you are connected, nor think lightly of your personal influence and responsibility, from the strong examples I have adduced of sinners who, from their talents, wealth, rank, and office, may have a gigantic power of mischief. After all, it requires neither genius nor talents to be a sinner, and to destroy much good. The mere school-boy or the dullest individual may wield a terrific power of destroying good, and incur by it an awful responsibility at the bar of God.

My dear young friends,—you who sport with the solemnities of your existence and make a mock at sin,—will you not pause now, and reflect on your character as sinners, armed with weapons that are carrying a wide and woful destruction over all that is most valued in the eye of God, and of the holy universe? I address some here to-day who enjoy the blessings of education, and whose sanguine youthful hopes tell them that they may yet fill some of the first places of honour, power, and trust in this great nation. What think you, then, of sustaining the character of sinners through the antici-

pated career of your future greatness? What think you, at death, of leaving your "wickedness in high places" as a mighty rock to be rolled down after you, on its thundering way of destruction, over all generations, till, in "the deepest hell," it crushes *you* so that you will "find a deeper still," to which the hell you suffer simply for destroying yourself will "seem a heaven!" What youthful heart, not brutalized by vice, would not ache and bleed with regret at the thought of sweeping with the besom of destruction so vast a territory of good as will be reached by the influence of any one sinner?

My young hearers, let me assure you that there is but one way in which you can possibly prevent the mischief; and that is, by an *entire change of character on your part*. No change will be made in the economy of the world to avert the consequences of your sins. *You must CEASE to be a sinner*, or the word of God and the constitution of nature stand pledged for it that you will inevitably destroy much good! If, then, you would prevent results so eternally disastrous as have now been described, you must repent and be converted, and become a new creature in Christ Jesus—created in him unto good works by the Holy Spirit! This is the only thing that can ever break the dreadful connexion between a sinner and his influence in destroying much good. Oh, that I knew how to bring the appeal of God's eternal love—of a Saviour's weeping compassion—of the prayers and throbbing anxieties of parents and pious friends—of the hopes of heaven, to bear upon your young hearts, so that you would now repent and turn to God, and throw

away those awful weapons of destruction with which you are at present armed! Or, if you will not be thus *won* to submission, let me then endeavour to *deter* you from taking another step in your destructive career, by appealing to your fears. Will you, then, look up steadfastly and behold one sinner before yonder judgment-seat of Christ, when "the great day of his wrath hath come?" The mystery of his iniquity, that has been so long and so widely working, is now brought out from its retirements and lurking-places with all its tremendous results, and displayed in the broad light of an open eternity; and the joints of his loins, though made strong for immortal suffering, are loosed, and the knees of his resurrectionary body smite one against another as the sinner himself gazes on its magnitude! Before him is his own eternal perdition, a deed of his own doing—hell laid bare, and moved to meet him at his coming! Behind him the long, haggard ranks whom he has destroyed, gnashing their teeth in the rage and the agony of the damned at their destroyer, and ready to leap on him as did the demons on the seven sons of Sceva; above, the uplifted arm of insulted almighty justice, poising the bolt that is to strike him and the victims of his influence down perdition's deeps for ever! Oh, by all the unutterable woes of his everlasting descent, I beseech, I conjure you who know that you are sinners, "Cease now to do evil, and learn to do well!"

SERMON XIII.

“But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.”—HEB. XI. 16.

IN peopling this earth, every voluntary movement made by the human race has been dictated by a desire for “a better country.” This desire has been the great impulse in all the exploring enterprises of the world. It burned in the bosom of Columbus, and bore him over unknown seas to this western continent. The desire of some better allotment than we at present enjoy, is inseparable from our very nature. So well known is this, as a part of our original constitution, and so little has ever been found in the happiest climes of earth to gratify this desire, that it accounts for the origin of that beautiful and poetic fancy of the existence of a still undiscovered blissful isle, where the very air is attuned to delight, where the flowers of spring never fade, where is to be found the fabled fountain of life deep, clear, perennial, sleeping on its bed of pearls, and where man, freed from the wants and the woes of his previous condition, may luxuriate in the ardent hopes, and lofty aspirations of an immortal youth. It is hardly necessary to remark, that this is but a *mere fancy*, that within the precincts of this little world, revolted from its God, and seathed with the curse of the apostacy, there is

no such happy isle, no Elysian fields. Yet God has provided for this instinctive longing of our spiritual nature after a better country. Not to fancy, but to *faith*, has He revealed a bright and blissful world far transcending in its glory the most splendid creations of poetic genius. God has disclosed a realm of light and love, of beauty and repose sufficiently exalted and grand to satisfy the largest and loftiest aspirations of the soul, after an immortal habitation. It is to *faith only* that this brighter land is revealed. The author of our text decides this when he remarks, "These all died *in faith*, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." God himself has prepared for them a country, a city, a home with a garniture which will amply satisfy the refined and exalted taste, the boundless hope and infinite aspirations of those whom He is not ashamed to own as his redeemed, adopted ones.

My dear hearers, will it not tend to strengthen our faith, and to lure our affections upwards, if we contemplate for awhile this better, this heavenly country, which we too profess to desire?

In what respects, then, is it a better country?

I. It is better *as to its materialism*, or as to *its refined and glorious physical elements*.

A profound writer has remarked, that "as the mind must, in all periods and regions of its existence, receive its happiness from causes exterior to itself, and as it is probable the one Supreme Cause of that happiness, the Deity, will make a very great part of the happiness which human spirits are to receive from him, come to them through the medium of his works: it is matter of inexpressible exultation that those works are so stupendous in multiplicity and magnitude, that they are, indeed, for all practical purposes, infinite." We may add also, that as in all immaterial or spiritual existences, there is an ascending series from less to more perfect, till the climax is reached in the absolute and infinite perfection of the great Father of our spirits, so analogy renders it highly probable that there is a similar series in the modifications and refinement of physical elements in all the material worlds of the universe, till the climax is reached in that one which God has made as the theatre for the more immediate displays of his own glory, and as the city of refuge, and eternal rest and joy to his own redeemed people. Regarding our earth as the least and the lowest in the scale of created worlds inhabited by intelligent beings, we nevertheless find that its material objects have a beauty and a sublimity which make them sources of enjoyment to cultivated minds. The extended plain variegated with its rivers and lakes, its alternating forests and luxuriant fields—the massive range of "cloud-capt" mountains with their rocks and precipices, and

waterfalls, the expanse of ocean, the splendours of the sun, by day, rising, culminating, and setting amidst an endless variety of gorgeous hues, painting every object of earth and sky, the nocturnal heavens, cloudless, and calm, studded with myriad worlds of far off light and glory, these all appeal to the senses, and speak a language to the soul respecting what God *can* prepare, and what "he hath prepared" (for them that love him) in the organization, and arrangement of material objects in the "better country." These terrestrial, and visible celestial objects not only excite peculiar and pleasurable emotions in a mind of cultivated taste, and acute sensibility, but show what an endless variety of modifications matter is susceptible of undergoing beneath the plastic hand of the Almighty. These, in defiance of the disorders introduced by sin, make our world a bright, beautiful, gladsome habitation for sensitive creatures.

Now if such be the nature of the material objects in the country "from whence" believers "come out," what must be the materialism or physical elements of that better country which they desire? Must not every object there, exhibit a refinement and material splendour far transcending the best and brightest forms of matter on earth?

God "hath *prepared* for them a city." It hath "*foundations*"—is a real place with appropriate physical arrangements as well as a glorious moral order. But how shall we describe its material magnificence! The richest combinations and the most brilliant colourings of unaided fancy are too poor and faint to approach such a task. "That disciple

whom Jesus loved," was once favoured with a glimpse of this city, and a part of his sublime description of it will now be transcribed. "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass, and the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was a jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcidony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chryso-prasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass; and I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." It is admitted that the language of this description is not only highly metaphorical, but partakes of the gorgeousness of oriental diction. Deducting for this, an unsophisticated mind will, notwithstanding, receive the impression, that this imagery is *designed* to convey the idea of a glorious materialism in heaven. What less can be meant by this solicitous grouping of all the most refined, precious and brilliant material objects apart, and distinct from that portion of the description which obviously refers to what is *spiritual* in the celestial economy? And why should there not be material objects in that better country, corresponding in their exquisite

forms, refined organization and resplendent qualities, to the exalted capacities of contemplation and of deep emotion which will characterize the inhabitants? The difficulty of assenting to the existence of material objects in heaven, results from our incapacity to conceive of physical objects almost infinitely different in refinement and grandeur from those of earth. This incapacity is the necessary consequence of our having no personal access to and close communication with other parts of the universe, and perhaps no apparatus of the senses, if we had such access and communication, by which we might learn the wonders and the glories of God's power, in the mere modifications of matter which his creative hand has distributed throughout his empire. Were we transferred to some one of those distant worlds which stand as a luminous point on the canvass of the nightly sky, and had we senses adapted to the physical elements there, we might discover a refinement and resplendency in material objects of which we had never formed the remotest idea, and which would far transcend the best and brightest conceptions that we have as yet entertained of heaven itself! And when we reflect that this "better country" of which our text speaks, is the more immediate seat and centre of Jehovah's universal kingdom, can we doubt that it has a *material* magnificence befitting the country, the court and the palace of "the King eternal, immortal, and invisible." What a scenery surrounds that celestial city! What may be the sublimity of "the mount Zion above?—its forest-clad pinnacles, clothed in eternal verdure—its green slopes and sunny walks,

not for "weary wandering feet," but for "the ransomed of the Lord" to walk therein "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." What the majestic flow of "the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal," imaging on its calm bosom the trees of life that adorn its banks and reflecting from its mirror surface other bright objects of that supernatural world! What must be the atmosphere of glory that floats over that better country! What the array of beauty, order, harmony and absolute perfection which the material objects of heaven in all their arrangements and phases exhibit! What images of blessedness and deep quietude, of innocence and purity, of ineffable grandeur and sublimity will crowd on every view of the celestial landscape and extend to that vast horizon which encircles all the mighty works of God! And what will be the splendour of that lofty firmament which overspreads the whole, and dispensing with sun, moon, and stars, is all lighted up with an eternal glow from the combined and richest glories of God and the Lamb! This being *the nature* of heaven's *light*, we may legitimately infer that its material objects must have an exquisitely refined, ethereal organization, to render them visible through *such* a medium, and to constitute them the appropriate reflectors of those divine rays that come directly from "*the excellent glory!*" In estimating the glorious materialism of that better country, then, we may assume that its objects, unlike those of earth, will never be subject to change and decay. They will remain in immortal bloom and beauty, the permanent and highest evidences of God's wisdom, power,

and benevolence in creating and modifying matter. Must not that be a far better country whose material objects have been created and arranged to suit the immediate dwelling-place of Jehovah—to remain as the noblest specimens of his infinite skill in the material universe, and to contribute to the happiness of the holy for ever?

II. It is a better country as respects *its location*. Here, on earth, we are so constituted, that we are greatly influenced by locality. It is this which often determines our preference of places, and causes us to regard a particular spot as “better” than others. And yet, all the change of situation which we can make on the face of this globe, gives us but a very faint idea of the happiness that might be conferred by a particular location. Were we placed on the planet Saturn, and capable of living there, we, doubtless, would have new, and very different conceptions respecting the material universe, from what we now possess, and in the superior light and physical scenery of that world, we might enjoy a happiness, of which at present we cannot form the most distant conjecture. So the location of some other world, were we permitted to visit it, with powers and susceptibilities adapted to its natural objects and arrangements, might confer on us a happiness incomparably greater than that of our supposed transfer to Saturn. What then may be the influence exerted by *the locality* of the “better country,” that is, “the heavenly?” From the earliest notices of the opinions of mankind on this subject, and from the structure of all languages, ancient and modern, and especially, the language of the Scriptures, the

impression seems to be universal, that heaven is *high* in the regions of space. True, the terms *high* and *low* are relative, and the relations they indicate have no place, perhaps, in the absolute comprehension which the Eternal and Infinite Mind has of all worlds, and all existences. But the relations of high and low, and the influence of locality, will probably continue to be perceived and felt by all finite intelligences, in all periods of their progress and development. Now, as heaven is a real material world, and doubtless, the *largest* in all immensity, and if so, as it must attract proportionally all other worlds by the great law of gravitation, is it not reasonable to suppose, that it is the *loftiest point*—*the grand centre* of the material universe? This supposition is confirmed analogically by the phenomena which we witness, in the system of which our globe forms a part. We see the earth and the planets with which we are acquainted, revolving around the sun as a common centre. And then, if modern science be not at fault, we find the sun itself, and the whole system of which it is the centre, revolving around a more distant and vast centre of another great system—and that again, revolving around a still more distant and mightier centre of another and greater system, and so on, till our finite powers are exhausted in tracing the order of this involuted series of systems to an ultimate centre. Is it not probable then, that this “better country,” that is, “the heavenly,” is the last and the loftiest in the ascending series, around which, as a grand *climacteric* centre, all the rest revolve? What a location this! All worlds and systems of worlds through

immensity, revolving round it in their ever-shifting and novel phases, as its mere planets! What a view will that location command of all other places where creative power has ever been exercised! It is the sublime observatory which God has erected for holy intelligences, from which they are for ever to see, and admire, and adore the stupendous exhibitions of Jehovah's creative power and goodness. What views will the location of that better country open through the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of universal nature. It is the vast focus of God's entire creation, to which converge all those rays of material glory, which gild alike the nearest and the most remote world of immensity! All the mighty products of God's creative energy will be spread out beneath that location, and lie open and unclouded to the eye of immortal spectators. In addition to all this, and as a peculiar excellence of this location, it is far removed from all those fluctuations and disturbances to which matter here is subjected, and exempt from all ungrateful change and disastrous action of the elements. No waning moons nor setting suns will gather the shadows of evening or the gloom of night, over that better country. No flood or ebbing tides will leave a trace of devastation on its shores. No wintry clouds and snows will desolate its sunny landscapes, nor vernal frosts wither its rich foliage, nor blight its profusion of fruits and flowers. No lightnings will scathe its lofty cedars, nor shatter spire nor dome of its celestial city. No fires will ever envelop its forests or dwellings, in frightful conflagration. No whirlwind or tornado shall ever agitate its peaceful,

balmy air, or make an unsightly chasm in its bright objects. No earthquake nor volcano shall mar its mountains or its plains, or spread terror or desolation through its quiet homes. That better country has its location far, and for ever removed, from all the violence of physical elements—

“From noise and tumult far,
Beyond the flying clouds, beyond the stars
And all this passing scene,”

where not a sound mingles with, or disturbs the harmony of that music, which every object, like the statue of Memnon, gives back to each ray of celestial light, and each pulsation of air that visits it! O, does not *such* a location make the heavenly a *better* country!

III. It is a better country *because it has better society*. In our estimate of the different countries of earth, we are greatly influenced by the state of society in each. As social beings, we cannot be insensible to what an extent, and how intimately our happiness is connected with the spirit and character of those with whom we are permanently in fellowship. The highest social enjoyment which can be attained on earth, results from a state of society whose predominant characteristics are intelligence, pure and elevated moral sentiments, and congeniality of taste, and of the benevolent affections. But the best and most perfect community of mortals associated any where on this fallen globe, will find a remnant of the selfish and sinful passions still existing sufficient to mar their social happiness. There is no perfect congeniality of mind, no perfect union of sympathies, no entire and unrestricted

blending of heart with heart, in this nether world. Sin continues to blight "the remaining tints of that faded social loveliness," that survived the overthrow in Eden, and the best society of earth, satisfies not the instinctive cravings of our nature, for the joys of a perfect fellowship with kindred minds. The regenerated soul, especially in its exalted sensibilities, and refined affections, and sympathies, desires "a better country" as to its society. But how shall we describe the society of that heavenly country? No community of persons on earth, however refined, virtuous, and elite, furnishes a model or even a remote analogy to assist our conceptions on this subject. Imperfections and sin attach to the happiest combination of associated minds in our world. Discrepancy of opinion, discordance of feeling, diversity of taste, to say nothing of the occasional play of the passions of jealousy, envy, and ambition, mingle with the best society of earth. But no trace of these evils will ever be found in the blessed society of the better country. Think for a moment how *vast* will be the social circle of heaven; what untold myriads of minds it will embrace. As to intelligence, every one of those minds, filled with all the fulness of God, familiar with his infinite perfections, as learned from creation, providence, redemption, and from *direct* disclosures in heaven! Every one of those minds, fired with a supremely benevolent desire to impart knowledge to all the younger members of the heavenly household. Every heart of this countless throng, beating in a perfect unison of exalted moral sentiments, and bound by a congeniality of taste and sympathies, whose mu-

tual flow will never be ruffled or obstructed. Not an unfriendly secret thought ever entertained for a moment, by one of this great celestial fraternity! In their prolonged and blissful intercourse, not one unkind word ever uttered, no jealousy or suspicion, no rivalry or heated emulation, no envy or strife, no alienation nor enmity to weaken "the unity of the Spirit" or sever "the bonds of peace," which bind them together in their high and holy fellowship. Nothing from without nor from within interrupts, for a moment, the sweet interchange of thought between mind and mind, nothing diverts the full tide of benevolent affection from its steady flow from heart to heart, nothing threatens violence to the delicate tie connecting congenial souls, or creates a momentary apprehension that the social joys of any one can ever suffer diminution. Love reigns perfect and triumphant there. Think again of *the glorious orders* of mind which form the society of that better country. Angels, and cherubim, and seraphim, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, and "the spirits of just men made perfect," all harmonized in one blissful family, all in sweet and absolute subjection to the great law of love, all perfected in the exercise of the highest and holiest affections of their nature, lovely and loving one another, intent on imparting happiness to each other to the utmost of their capacities without intermission and for ever! When we reflect on the exalted faculties they possess, their lofty and ennobling themes of thought, their susceptibility of tender and profound emotion, the intimate union in which they exist, and the perfect proportion and

harmony established between their intellectual perceptions of the loveliness of moral qualities and their heart's zest, and appreciation of it, the *social* joys of that better country seem greater than all the bliss we ever conceived of as existing in heaven. But the crowning glory of the celestial society is, that each one, in addition to the sweet and unrestricted intercourse which he has with all others, is permitted to have free and full communion with God the Father, and close and endearing fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, through the eternal Spirit! What may be the social joys of a finite mind thus imbosomed in the presence, love and smiles of the infinite Jehovah, it would be presumption to conjecture. As we dwell on the overmatching theme, we cannot but exclaim, "O! Lord, this sufficeth for the best society—the most ardent and capacious social longings of the mightiest creature Thou hast made, can ask no more!"

IV. Another feature in the heavenly country that makes it better than earth, is, that it has *infinitely better employments*. The service which the Christian renders to his God here, is an imperfect and often intermitted service. In this world the employment and pursuits of the regenerated mind, whilst they aim at the best ends by the use of the best means, are, nevertheless, subject to be interrupted, and rendered sadly unsuccessful by sin. This is the land of conflict, not of triumph. Much of the Christian's present employment consists in his great and agonizing struggle, not only with the remaining sins of his own heart, but with "principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of

this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places." His chief pursuit is that of a good soldier of Jesus Christ, enduring the hardness of the camp, and plying the whole armour of God against his numerous and subtle foes, in the good fight of faith. Instead of exultation and praise, therefore, he is often employed in deep penitence and importunate prayer. And even in his benevolent efforts to do good to others, he experiences, both from without and from within, a resistance which greatly deducts from his success. But the country he desires is "a better country," because it has incomparably better employments. There the very first play of the immortal powers will be in the transports of a perfect and final victory over sin, death, and hell. All foes without, and foes within, will then have been eternally vanquished. Conflict will be exchanged for triumph, penitence and importunate prayer for the joys of a ratified and everlasting pardon, and for the work of praise, perpetual love and gratitude, faith for unclouded absolute vision, hope for *actual* possession and enjoyment. Hear the rapt Apostle describe the employments of that better country— "And they rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps, and they sung, as it were, a new song, before the throne. These were the redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb. And they sung the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the

Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints. After this, I beheld, and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." What an employment for redeemed immortal spirits! Praise, eternal praise, to Jehovah, the rapturous exercise of redeemed souls perfected in love, and confirmed in holiness, and transferred to "those pure and peaceful realms of rest," where not a temptation, trial, sin, or sorrow, will interfere with the easy and incessant action of their faculties through immortality.

And, as employing the ministry of intelligent and sanctified mind for the benefit of rational creatures, and to fulfil the purposes of divine benevolence in their happiness, is, doubtless, a part of the economy of that better country; then, on *what errands of love* to other beings and other portions of the universe, may the redeemed be engaged! What exalted pursuits may thus be presented to them, what noble spheres of benevolent activity thus assigned to them in the better arrangements of the heavenly constitution; spheres ever ascending and circling the wide domains of God, in which they will move with the celerity of thought itself, fulfilling the good pleasure of their God, and scattering blessings on their way, on a scale of magnitudes commensurate with eternity! O! is not that a better country

which furnishes the deathless energies of mind, and the growing affections of immortal hearts, such employments!

V. It is a better country because it has a *better government* than any on earth. The governments of this world are the defective contrivances of fallible men, and the best of them partake largely of the imperfections of their authors. None of them seem to attain all the ends, and secure all the interests that might be attained and secured, through the medium of well devised human governments. So even the moral government of God over this world is only in its progress to perfection, and not already perfected here. It does not profess to administer perfect retribution in the present scene. Vice often prospers and triumphs, while virtue falls in the streets, and is trodden down in deep depression. The great law of God is violated daily, and rebellion unfurls and waves its banners on all the high places of earth. Insubordination, misrule and anarchy mark a large majority of Jehovah's subjects in this world. Now, that is a better country which the Christian desires, because it has a better government. In proof of this, you need only be reminded that there the moral government of God is absolutely perfect. Virtue there is rewarded to the whole extent of its merit, vice is punished in the exact degree of its demerit, and is completely excluded, caged, and confined, at such an infinite remove, as to render its encroachments on that government for ever impossible. There is not one rebel amongst all the myriads of subjects in that better country, not one heart that cherishes for a

moment a solitary disloyal thought. The law of God there is obeyed *perfectly*, the will of God there is done *absolutely*, all the good pleasure of his goodness is executed with an infinite *promptitude* and *cordiality*. The control of his government over the whole extent of that country is omnipotent, not a good thought unrewarded, no right of the lowest subject even for a moment jeopardized, infinite wisdom, benevolence, and almightiness, holding the reins, and warding off all disturbances from the movements of his administration, as he carries it forward through immortality, dispensing boundless blessings to its subjects! Love, loyalty, obedience, cordial and absolute subjection to God, hallowed regard, benevolent respect for each other's rights, and a deep and eternal interest in each other's happiness, are the unchanging characteristics of the governed, and the blessed and unfailing fruits of the government in that better country. What wonder that the scriptures speak of "*the glorious majesty of His kingdom.*" To form any adequate conception of the moral government of Jehovah as it exists, and is administered in heaven, is one of the most sublime exercises of the human intellect, and involves some of the highest forms of thought. The myriads of rational accountable agents which it controls, alike in the nearest and most remote world of space, the harmony, holiness, and happiness, which it sustains and increases in an endless progression, and the manifestations of divine glory which it gives as the great organ or instrumentality by which he reigns, and effects the stupendous purposes of his benevolence throughout the universe, invest the

moral government of God with an ineffable grandeur and majesty! What wonder that the Christian, surrounded by the imperfections and mal-administration of human governments, and by the resistance and rebellion of sinners against the divine government in this world, should desire a better country, that is, a heavenly, where God's eternal government, perfected and approved, is diffusing the infinitude of its blessings to his wide dominions!

VI. The heavenly is a better country, because it has *better* PROSPECTS. The prospects that open on worldly men in reference to different localities on earth, have great influence on their estimate of a better country. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that it can never be wholly satisfied with present possessions and attainments. It seems necessary to the completeness of our happiness, as rational and forecasting creatures, that we should at all periods of our existence have some real or imaginary good *in prospect*. True, the Christian in this world has *his* prospects, brighter far than those of worldly minds. From the first dawn of spiritual day, of saving light in his soul, he has the general and comprehensive prospect of being translated to that better country, with all its benign and blessed arrangements. But this prospect varies with the varying strength of his faith, and the unsteady shinings of his hope. In this world it is not a permanently bright and settled prospect. Indeed, it is not improbable that one of the greatest changes that will occur in the soul in consequence of its entrance into the better country, will be in reference to its prospects. Surrounded, as it will be there, with

objects of such material glory—placed in such a locality—associated with such society, God and the Lamb being a part—triumphant over all the perils and the woes of this state, and having engaged in such employments, and being the happy subject of such a government as characterize the economy of heaven—O what prospects of ineffable and transcendent glory may then burst on his enraptured vision! No fear that his most exalted and capacious aspirations will ever be checked or fail of being realized. Knowledge, the knowledge of God, in its most august displays in that better country, opens its exhaustless stores, and spreads out before him its rich treasures, glittering along the line of eternal ages, and luring on his dilating capacities to make attainments that far surpass what angels now know. Yea, he has the prospect of “knowing even as he is known”—of having a kind of quick and ubiquitous *intuition*, by which he will yet see through all the works and ways of God, and have a range and comprehension of thought greater than we ordinarily attribute to Omniscience itself! Nor are the Christian’s prospects less bright there in reference to attainments in all those moral qualities, those exalted virtues, which, when extended without limit, constitute the infinite perfections of Jehovah. Holiness, transformation into the likeness of the Son of God, displays to him its mighty degrees on the scale of immortality, and opens a prospect of attainments which, during the revolutions of eternal years, may accumulate upon his soul an aggregation of spiritual qualities, that will bring him nearer and make him more like to God than the loftiest and brightest se-

raph before the throne is at present. So stupendous are the changes of this kind in prospect, that were it possible for the redeemed soul when it shall have realized them, to revisit our earth, that soul would be devoutly adored by prostrate millions, and would pour a tide of glory over the whole globe, incomparably greater than blinded sinners ever conceived of, as belonging to God himself!

And what must be the prospects of *happiness* which open on the Christian in that better country? In one view his prospects are brighter far than those of angels. His intimate and mysterious spiritual union with the Lamb on the throne, and the joys resulting from this and from his personal interest and participation in all the glorious and eternal issues of the scheme of redeeming grace and dying love, belong *not* to angels. This opens a new and bright vista through immortality, along which no angel's eye can look with the hopes and expectancy of a redeemed human spirit. The fulness of joy and the rivers of pleasure at God's right hand proffer their exhaustless resources alike and equally to the ever-expanding capacities of saints and angels; and the prospect of drinking from these through an endless duration is indeed a prospect of bliss sufficient, one would think, to overwhelm imagination itself, even in the excursive capability and immortal energies with which it will be endowed in that better country. But to be for ever on the throne with Jesus—to be bathed for ever in the beams of his blessed face—to be modelled, soul and body, after the exact image of his glorified human nature—to praise for ever his redeeming grace and dying love

—to be drawn for ever nearer to his holy bosom by the tie that united us to him in this world, and to have our hearts meet his, reciprocally warm with the mutual love of the Redeemer and the redeemed, oh, this is the *prospect* that belongs *only* to the ransomed from amongst men, and that gilds the Christian's immortality with "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

Such are the prospects of the heavenly country. Are they not "*better*" prospects? As we turn away from them to earth, how dim and diminutive does every thing appear that it has to offer to human hope and aspiration! We instinctively raise our eyes again, and strive to look through the portals of that better country with a penetrating gaze that may compass and linger still on those prospects of transcendent glory that brighten and extend along the dateless ages of eternity!"

LASTLY.—It is a better country, because it is characterized by a *glorious spiritualism*, or an *assemblage of resplendent SPIRITUAL objects or qualities* as far superior to all manifestations of the divine perfections and of human virtues in this world as heaven is to earth. This is infinitely the brightest and best feature in the constitution of the celestial world. The utter impotency of the human mind adequately to conceive of or describe this feature must stand confessed. On this point the scriptures themselves attempt no detailed description. The beloved disciple, for whom the veil that conceals that better country was once momentarily raised, had a glimpse of this spiritualism; but in reference to it he gives us only an indirect suggestion, in that

pregnant and remarkable declaration—“ And I saw *no temple therein*; for THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY AND THE LAMB *are the temple* of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; *for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof!*” What must be the nature and character of the spiritual objects or qualities there to justify this language and these allusions, which indicate that the manifestations of Jehovah’s perfections are such, the visible displays of his glory, as perceived and reflected from other holy minds, so great, that they form a temple of sufficient amplitude and magnificence to correspond with all the other august arrangements of the place, and to be adapted to the number and the exalted natures of the celestial worshippers; and still more, that these revelations of his own infinite attributes are so stupendous as to form one vast firmament, sufficient, in its dense and glowing splendours, to light the whole extent of that better country, and to invest every object with an intense and dazzling radiancy! Oh, how do the refined materialism, the sublime locality, the select society, the ennobling employments, and the bright prospects of heaven dwindle in the comparison with, or rather borrow all their lustre from, this effulgence of the Godhead, which takes precedence of all temples made with hands, and of all created suns and stars—and will more than supply the place of spacious walls, and lofty dome, and gorgeous garniture—and will pour its eternal tide of brightness on the immortal throng of worshippers before the throne!

My dear Christian friends, such is the better

country which *you* profess to *desire*—such the home and the prospects that await you in the heavenly world. Are you living as the expectants of so glorious an inheritance? Oh, it would seem that this better country had a power of allurements which might be felt by every intelligence, except the fiends of perdition and the souls of earth, that are “*dead* in trespasses and in sins!” Christians, open your eyes to the brightness, and your hearts to the warmth of that heaven, to wake and lure you thither. Confess yourselves strangers and pilgrims on earth, and live, like them, with the end of your pilgrimage steadily in your eye, and the better country fully in your heart.

“Seeing ye look for such things, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” Will not the beams of that bright and blessed world win you away from the darkness of backsliding and distance from God? Would that all God’s people had their hearts and their hopes full of heaven; then would their listlessness be broken up, the fetters of their captivity stricken off, and their souls winged to follow holiness, and to soar and shine till they actually became as suns and stars in the firmament of God for ever.

Such too, Christian, is the better country—even a heavenly—to which your efforts for the salvation of sinners may raise them. Oh! do your efforts correspond to the magnitude and grandeur of the destinies that may be affected by them? The heaven now described is the home to which, by the blessing of God, you may introduce the soul of your exiled fellow man. Oh, this consideration ought to

send you, with an angel's speed, and glowing with an angel's zeal, and girded with an angel's strength, to the perishing souls of sinners, praying them to be reconciled to God! If you convert one soul from the error of its way, the infinite glories of that better country will bless that soul, and be your reward for ever.

FINALLY.—My dear, impenitent hearers, the better country now described is the bright lure by which God would win you to the obedience of the faith. He opens the portals of that resplendent realm, and calls you to repent beneath the melting beams that shine through upon your present darkness. He calls upon you to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ beneath the visions of that eternal throne which the redeemed shall share with him in heaven! He girds you around with the light and the warmth of that genial world—gives you a glimpse of its prospects of ineffable glory—hails your ear with its songs and shouts of immortal victory, its anthems and transporting hallelujahs—and then asks you if, blind and deaf to sights and sounds like these, you will still madly rebel, and plunge yourselves into the blackness of darkness, into the weeping and wailing of perdition! O! impenitent hearers, let me implore you to answer this question to your God by the full-souled negation—“No, blessed God!—melted by heaven's warmth, directed by heaven's light, and won by heaven's love, we come—*we come* in penitence, faith, and submission, and cast our souls on Thee for full redemption and an eternal inheritance in the better country, through the blood of the Lamb!”

ADDRESS

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THAT the Bible has exerted certain influences on man, no intelligent infidel will deny.

It is a fact equally indisputable that these influences have followed the possession of the scriptures every where, with a uniformity as unbroken as that which characterizes the connexion between physical cause and effect. And this fact, in itself, is no mean incidental proof of the divinity of the holy oracles. It separates them from all merely human productions by an immeasurable chasm. The most gifted master-spirits of the world have left but few monuments of their genius that have exerted any wide-spread or permanent influence on our race. The declaration of the Psalmist, in another case, is literally true of their mightiest mental efforts,—“They *disquiet* themselves *in vain*.” By far the greater part of the struggles and the attainments of the distinguished minds of all classes uninfluenced by the Bible are this day as though they had never been. They have left no deep and enduring impression on human nature. Of all who have lived and laboured, and died and passed from this terres-

trial scene, how few have wrought into their productions those living, eternal truths, or those forms of universal and unfading beauty, that will carry conviction to the intellect, and a divine charm to the heart, wherever man is found, till the close of time! Homer, amongst the poets, and Aristotle, amongst philosophers, have had a more extended and enduring sway over their species than any un-inspired writers. Yet, how many hearts have been waked to deep devotion and thrilled with holy delight by David's harp that would remain unmoved by the Grecian bard. How many minds have been captivated by the *logic* of Paul, and felt the rapture of the noblest convictions of reason, on whom the metaphysical acumen and mystic refinement of an Aristotle would be utterly lost. Since the Pentateuch has been written, the scriptures have had an unbroken influence on some portion of mankind. The Jewish nation, during the lapse of twenty-five centuries, embracing certain periods of the grossest moral darkness and profligacy in the annals of the world, exhibit a striking proof of the deep and permanent control of divine revelation. Their knowledge of the true God—their rites and ceremonies—their code of civil and criminal laws—their state polity and their moral virtues, compared with those of contemporary nations, furnish ample testimony to the power of those "lively oracles" committed to their keeping.

Nor may we omit to notice here that comprehensive adaptation to each sex, and all the gradations of age and station—that sweeping universality of influence on man which excludes not one of the

species, and is the distinguishing characteristic of the Bible. The beautiful language of the Psalmist in reference to the sun is equally applicable to it,—“His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” The poetry, the philosophy, the civil policy, the laws, the literature, the manners, and the morals of the civilized world have felt its omnipresent sway, and borrowed from its peerless beauty, its wisdom, and its sublimity.

Now, aside from its direct instrumentality in converting the soul, where is the book that will compare with the Bible in its diffusive and permanent influence on man? Yet this book, more than any other, has had to encounter, in all ages, the gigantic enmity and opposition of a world lying in wickedness. It has had to meet and overcome all the resistance which the aggregate depravity of earth and hell could oppose to the progress of its influence. More glorious from the struggle, and triumphant in every conflict, it has been and is now influencing the dearest hopes and loftiest aspirings of millions blest by its light.

It has diffused itself, by translations, into one hundred and fifty different languages and dialects, spoken by two-thirds or three-fourths of the entire family of man. Indeed, He who is said to “have created every thing double, a world without and a world within,” has given his word such an adaptation to the moral constitution of man, as clearly to indicate the ultimate and universal sway which revelation is destined to hold over human nature. The most striking feature in this adaptation, and one

prophetic of the all-comprehensive and permanent power of the Bible over our race, is its capability of deeply influencing *the young*. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?—by taking heed thereto according to Thy word."

When we contemplate the powers and susceptibilities of the young man's mind, perverted as they are, by the apostasy, and connect in our view that derangement in the world without, produced by the same cause, we find him, from both these sources, warred upon by influences adapted to work out his degradation and ruin. On his *moral* life there is a constant action of unfriendly influences, not unlike the play of those disastrous physical elements on natural life, which renders all animal existence one prolonged conflict. Every young man, in his alienation from God, carries about with him the seeds of self-degradation and ruin. This, however humiliating, is no libel on fallen human nature. The young man enters on his way with numerous and powerful passions, uncontrolled even by the slender checks which a more extended experience and observation might furnish. The course of this present world, marred as it is by sin, affords ample means of indulgence, and a multitude of occasions to *stimulate* youthful passion. Now, moral philosophy has established no truth more clearly than this, that God has assigned *certain limits* to all the gratifications of our sensitive nature, beyond which man cannot go, without incurring degradation and misery. All that the young man, then, has to do in order to ensure sorrow and ruin, is simply to disregard and over-step those boundaries which the

Creator has affixed to the indulgence of his passions. It is a fearful fact in our blended physical and moral constitution, that the most innocent propensity of human nature may effectually destroy character and happiness, merely by *unlimited gratification*. It is a spectacle of solemn and sorrowful interest, to behold a young man commencing the career of life with that wonderful mechanism of desire and passion, which constitutes the sensitive part of his nature, deprived of its great balance by the fall, and acting with their regularity and direful intensity consequent on such a deprivation! The *ardour* of youth is proverbial. The war which his own passions wage on his character and happiness, if he be left unaided in the conflict, will be a war of victory and extermination. The sad spoils of its triumph are strown on the pathway of many an inconsiderate youth. Amongst the young men of this day, the wrecks of reputation, hope, usefulness, happiness, and life, effected by the lion-like power of their own indomitable passions, are truly melancholy and appalling! We may exclaim in the language of inspiration, in another case—"Come, see what desolations" are thus "wrought" amongst our beloved youth. "Behold how great a matter a little fire" of unhallowed, unrestrained passion, "kindleth!" Now, "wherewithal shall a young man," in this respect, "cleanse his way?" Where shall we find a balance that will equalize the movements of this dangerous machinery of fallen human nature? How shall we save the young man from becoming the victim of his own unbridled propensities? Where shall we find an influence that will furnish an ade-

quate counteraction to the violent impulse of youthful passions? In *the Bible alone*. This holy Book meets the young man in his way, and with a commanding and a *divine* authority, defines and specifies the limits which the Creator has assigned to the gratification of all his passions and appetites, and on those limits places the "flaming sword" of *God's* prohibition, to deter him from transgressing. It exhorts "young men to be sober-minded," to rule their own spirits, to "let their moderation be known unto all men." Nor are these as the cold advisory precepts of human philosophy. The Bible, more than all books of philosophy or morals, reveals those tremendous sanctions adapted to over-awe the waywardness and impetuosity of youthful passions. With an intuitive knowledge of that love of happiness, and aversion to pain, which are so quick and powerful in their impulses on the young heart, the Bible displays to him the contrasted consequences of obedience and rebellion. It puts in one scale the momentary gratifications of sin, and in the other those prolonged pains and penalties that come upon the sinner by way of natural retribution in the present life, and shows him that the former, weighed against the latter, are but "as the dust of the balance." It discloses the certain and inseparable connexion between moral cause and effect, and affirms that, "though hand join in hand, iniquity shall not go unpunished." It does more. The Bible alone makes those definite and appalling disclosures of the consequences of sin on man's *future* and endless life, which exert the greatest restraining force that can be brought to bear on a free moral

agent. The strongest lure to the hopes, and the most tremendous appeal to the fears of human nature, are found in the awards of the judgment-seat, and in the vivid reality with which the Bible invests heaven and hell, as the ultimate destination of the righteous and the wicked. How admirably adapted is such a book to extend a controlling influence over the young man, to curb, by its stupendous sanctions, "the fountains of the great deep" of depravity within himself, and to impel him to the most strenuous efforts of self-denial and self-government. Like its Divine author, the Bible only has an omnipotence that can ride upon the whirlwind, and direct the storm of youthful passion. But, assuming that the young man is saved from the destructive sway of baleful passions within, still all the exigencies of his condition are not met, while there is no adequate and effective force to oppose to the multiform appliances of temptation from without. *The contagion of bad example, or the influence of evil companionship,* may effect his degradation and ruin. It is amongst the mysteries of our present being, that the mortal and immortal destinies of man should be subject to so decisive an influence from his fellow-man. No fact is more obviously taught, or amply attested in the social history of the world, than that "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a *companion of fools shall be DESTROYED.*" Now, on no class is the power of fellowship so great as on the young, and on *young men* especially. It is in youth that the principle of imitation, and the desire of social intercourse, act with greatest intensity. If the circle of

companionship be known on which a young man enters when he first quits the paternal roof, it requires no prophetic spirit to predict his future character and career. *Conformity* to his associates, is *the law of his nature*. To any young man, unguarded by the power of God's truth, the temptations of a round of vicious company will be utterly over-matching. He has no principle inherent in his fallen nature that can oppose to them an effective resistance. The influence of wicked confederates on the youthful mind is supreme and controlling. If not counteracted, that influence will ultimately seduce, corrupt, and destroy, any young man who is kept within its potent and deadly sweep.

The close observation and painful solicitude of parents and teachers over the young give them an appalling view of the power of "one sinner to destroy much good." And although the man who will deliberately seduce his fellow man be, in some respects, *worse* than the devil—for Satan has not a community of nature and of sympathies with men—yet there are never wanting, in any society, some foul, malignant spirits, who prosecute this work of their gloomy father with a zeal and industry, a malevolent exultation at success, and a growing ambition for further triumphs worthy the great destroyer himself, in the enmity and energies of his superhuman nature. Few young men are born to so select a circle of companionship as not to meet in their way the arts and the wiles of these *incarnate* fiends. "Wherewithal," then, "shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy word." It is the Bible which discloses, in all their

magnitude, the *consequences* of wicked companionship, and the decisive influence it exerts on the highest destinies of men for two worlds. Indeed, this topic extends through almost all the historical portions of the sacred volume, and is found in many of its direct precepts and teachings. In the companionships of Eli's sons—in the history of the associates of some of the younger kings of Israel—in the confederacies which Solomon formed in early life, as well as in the alliances of the younger part of the Jewish nation with the neighbouring heathen youth, the Bible utters a voice of warning to the young man, as to the choice of his companions, solemn and awful as if spoken in the "seven thunders" from beneath the eternal throne! It meets him on his entrance into society with an appeal adapted to win upon the generous feelings of the young heart, by assuring him, "*Blessed* is the man that walketh not astray in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." It teaches him with all earnestness to pray, "Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men; in whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes." It expostulates with him, "Be not deceived; evil communications corrupt good manners." And it finally declares, with the emphasis of doom, "*The companion of fools* SHALL BE DESTROYED!" The Bible, then, is pre-eminently adapted to throw over the young man a mightier shield than the fabled one that fell down from Jupiter; and to furnish him, by its encouragements and its warnings, an adequate protection from the most insidious and seductive of all baleful influences from without, tending to his

destruction. And such is actually its salutary power on many a young mind that is not *savingly* enlightened by its holy truths. A striking individual example of this occurs to me amongst the recollections of my academic life. A youth, from the bosom of a pious family, entered college with me. He was of prepossessing personal appearance, of great polish and urbanity in his manners, strictly moral, and possessing a singularly gifted mind. His respect for the word of God, and his *daily perusal* of it, was a subject of grateful remark by the pious, and of envenomed ridicule by the wicked of his fellow students. Just as long as he held daily converse with his Bible he effectually resisted "the enticements of sinners;" he was unmoved by the flattery or the frowns, the threats or the persuasions of wicked companions, and retained the integrity of his morals and his high grade of scholarship. But, in an evil hour he forsook the divine oracles, and then his progress in vice began; he fell an easy prey to the artful allurements of more hardened transgressors, dashed headlong into the wildest excess, and ended his collegiate course in infamy, and in an unsuccessful attempt at suicide! Would he ever have reached so ignominious a goal had he held up the word of God as "a light to his feet and a lamp to his path" in the perilous race of life?

But mere protection—a successful counteracting of the causes that combine to degrade and ruin the young man—by no means meets all the wants of his nature. If his intellectual and moral endowments are worthy the shield and the buckler of God's truth for their defence, then their *right di-*

rection must be an object of unspeakable moment. That influence which connects the busy energies of the young mind with the highest pursuits, and guides them successfully to the noblest achievements within the limits of human agency, is, in some respects, even more important than that which merely protects them from injury. Within every youthful mind there is an elastic coil of spiritual force, which, if connected with a suitable mechanism in the moral world, may effect stupendous results for good. *Youth* is notoriously the time for action and arduous enterprise. It is the season when those mysterious energies that distinguish mind from matter, and that characterize the undying and eternal element of human nature, stir themselves up, and seek to grapple with objects of a magnitude and grandeur suited to their inherent force.

Every young man not degraded by gross sensuality and vice feels, at intervals, a restless and uncontrollable desire after some sphere of noble daring and lofty achievement. He is aware that there is a great disproportion between his newly matured and vigorous capabilities, and all the ordinary employments and pursuits of life. He is occasionally conscious of irrepressible aspirations after a wider sphere and more exalted enterprises. The young mind, somewhat like the young animal frame, seems to demand and to delight in those athletic exercises which tax its strength to the utmost. This is probably a fragment of man's original exalted ambition in innocence, still discoverable amidst the wreck and the tragic overthrow of his nature. The Bible itself clearly recognises this peculiarity in the con-

stitution of the young man, by the declaration, "I write unto *young men*, BECAUSE YE ARE STRONG." Indeed, it would seem as though the young mind might have a most powerful presentiment of its own immortality from the very struggles and puttings forth of its present strength. This unwasted and awful might in the young spirit betokens alike its deathless nature and the high destiny to which it may rise in a future scene of being. Now, chronicles of wars, of conquests, of military glory, and of universal dominion, have been the books which have too often and too long usurped the direction of that aggregate of gigantic energies in the young man, that pants and burns for a wider and freer arena of action than is furnished by the limited pursuits of every-day life. It was the perusal of such books, and the intense contemplation of such scenes and characters as they describe, that first fired the unconquerable ambition of young Napoleon, and of the youthful Alexander, and misguided their terrific powers to the destruction of half the world. If these two most illustrious *murderers* of their species in their youth had taken heed to their way, according to the word of God, how different might have been their careers and their destinies, and how different the results of their lives and actions on the great interests of human nature! The Bible is the only book that can give a safe direction to the strength and executive capabilities of the young mind. And, as though it had been written with specific reference to this fact, it presents all those objects of pursuit, and that enlarged and attractive sphere of action, so peculiarly adapted to the ardent

desires and lofty emulation of young men. It reveals achievements sufficiently vast and sublime to tax the utmost capacity of deep emotion, and to give ample scope for the play of all the untiring and immortal activities of the young man. The Bible meets him in the commencement of his way, and presents the *world* as the wide theatre on which his capabilities of action may be displayed. Yes, the **WHOLE WORLD**—not in the attractions of wealth, and fame, and power, and temporal dominion. The acquisition of all these would be a poor achievement for those wondrous spiritual forces in the young mind which make it but a “little lower than the angels.” No; the Bible presents the whole world to him, in the most serious relations and august interests in which it can be contemplated by intelligent beings. It is shown to him as a world in revolt from its God, yet reclaimable, and *to be reclaimed* by the instrumentality of mind in the use of those means which its Maker has appointed.

What objects of magnitude and grandeur are here presented to enlist the energies and noble daring of the young man! To do battle with all the ignorance of God and of duty, with all the errors and prejudices, the superstitions, idolatry, skepticism, and fortified enmity of a world lying in wickedness, gives scope for a higher courage, and a more inflexible purpose of mind, and bespeaks a more sublime conflict, than the greatest of earth’s warriors ever knew. To have an agency in combating and conquering those tremendous forces of moral evil that have been at work for nearly six thousand years, creating and perpetuating the giant vices that have

cursed the world, is a greater and more enduring glory than was ever won by a military chieftain in the most splendid victory that history records. To pull down those "*strong holds*" that have been reared from the granite of total depravity, and cemented by the mortar of "the pit," and to do it by the weapons of that warfare in which the Bible would enlist the young man, is the noblest achievement of which human nature, in its present sphere, is capable. To band together with all the good and the great who have identified their influence and very existence with that instrumentality by which the infinite God is "putting to flight the armies of the aliens," subduing and extirpating the monstrous growths of moral evil, reclaiming this revolted province to its allegiance, and preparing earth for a millennial harvest of the fruits of holiness, is the most honourable association, and the highest style of combined action to which the young mind can aspire. To connect one's sympathies and active beneficence with the causes which God has put in train to assuage those ponderous and aggravated woes under which our common nature has been crushed and groaning since the apostacy in Eden, and to wield an effective instrumentality in upheaving and throwing them off from a depressed and suffering race, is a destination in well-doing which a ministering angel might covet! To exert an influence in harmonizing all the discordant elements of the entire society of earth, in binding all classes and castes of men, notwithstanding their former repellencies, in the permanent bonds of brotherhood, in obliterating all sinful distinctions, and breaking

down all the arbitrary walls of partition between them, in restoring long lost peace, and blending heart with heart, through the whole circle of the race, infinitely transcends the greatest achievements of diplomacy that ever characterized the cabinets of nations. To exert that *spiritual might* which will level mountains, fill up valleys, and prepare a broad high-way for Messiah's triumphal car, as he rides forth to the splendid conquests and regal glories of his millennial reign, is a more august manifestation of human power, than the noblest discoveries of modern science, and constitutes an activity allied to that of angels, and of the moral omnipotence of God himself!

Now, these are the objects of pursuit—these the exalted enterprises—this the lofty sphere of exertion which *the Bible* presents to enlist and tax the noblest energies of the young man! And should he never become truly pious, nor enter with a *Christian* spirit into this sublime department of activity, yet the very contemplation of such stupendous objects of pursuit, and of so magnificent an arena of effort as being within the reach of human aspiration and attainment, will exert a great and salutary influence on the young man's career in the affairs of life. While he remains familiar with these disclosures of his Bible, he can never consent to grovel with reptiles on a mole-hill, when he feels that he is made with capacities to aspire after such objects as we have now described, and to soar and shine amongst "the morning stars," and to shout for joy with "the sons of God."

Again. Though to feel a restless and uncontrol-

lable desire for effort and great achievement, be an inwoven part of the constitution of an ingenuous youth, yet, in his moments of reflection, he must be conscious that *he has no great inherent principle of action proportioned* to the objects of pursuit, and the sphere of exertion presented to him by the divine oracles. He is sensible that he lacks the great motive power necessary to secure perseverance and success in his career of glory, and honour, and immortality. His observation must be very limited, if he have not noticed that it is for want of such a governing and impelling principle, that the strength of the majority of young men is utterly wasted. Their course is too often influenced by mere fitful impulses. Passion and caprice, in their endless mutabilities, take the helm, and the noble vessel, with all its sail and gallant bearing, makes no steady progress, and reaches not the desired haven. In fallen human nature, there is no fixed and commanding principle of action sufficient to secure those exalted attainments of which man, considered as an intelligent agent, is capable. "Mortal spirits tire and faint" in those grand moral enterprises to which God and duty urge us. Neither the buoyancy of young hope, nor the force of natural courage, nor the fires of the most lofty ambition, will avail to carry the human mind along through life in an unintermitted course of benevolent activity. We need a higher, a more generous and permanent power of impulsion. We must have a principle of action instinct with a divine energy, by which we can "mount as on wings of eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint." Now, the Bible prof-

fers to the young man just such a principle. It proposes to bring him under the sway of supreme love to God and to man. Nor is this a vague mysterious principle of action, like the supposed ethereal influence which animates and guides the heroes and heroines of romance. It is the primeval law of man's being, under the force of which, had he remained unfallen, he would have accomplished all the great purposes, and attained all the noble destinies of an intelligent and immortal existence. One must be little versed in the philosophy of the heart, who does not see the adaptation and power of this principle to impel and control all the faculties of our nature, and to conduct man onward in that exalted sphere of action, and towards that ultimate and glorious destination, indicated, not less by the very condition and relations of his being, than by the explicit declarations of the divine oracles. In the inspired history of those worthies who acted so conspicuous a part in the first promulgation of Christianity, the Bible gives us a practical illustration of the moral force of this principle. By its influence alone, can we account for the unparalleled labours and patient endurance of evils exhibited by the great Apostle of the Gentiles. It was this which inspired his moral courage, and carried his noble spirit triumphantly through such scenes of action and of suffering, as he has described in the following eloquent paragraph. "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a

night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils amongst false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" "THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US!" This was the great master impulse that urged him onward and upward in his shining way, till he seized that crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, had prepared for him. To the vigour and vital sway of this principle, are attributable the moral triumphs of the primitive Christians in their dauntless withstandings of the organized opposition of the heathen world—in their unwavering adherence to the cause of truth under the most appalling persecutions and tortures—in their ceaseless efforts to spread the gospel and to bless the world, and in their holy calm and quietude of spirit when facing the terrors of the rack and the gibbet, the scaffold and the stake of martyrdom. What a sublime principle of action is this! fully adequate to all the achievements which redeemed human nature is ever destined to make. Now, the Bible proposes to gather all the energies of the young man under the control of such a principle, a principle which eminently characterized the course of the Divine Saviour himself while on earth—a principle which

governs the diversified and untiring activities of all sinless intelligences throughout the vast empire of God. And here, it may be remarked, also, that should the young man not become pious, nor voluntarily submit his heart to the control of this principle, yet the very consideration, that redeemed human nature is capable of being moved and directed permanently by so glorious a law of activity, will exert a powerful influence on the character, pursuits, and principles of the young man.

True to the mental constitution of the young man, the Bible not only protects from internal and external causes of ruin, presents the noblest objects of pursuit, urges to the loftiest deeds of Christian heroism, and supplies the most powerful principle of action, but it also addresses *that peculiar susceptibility of his mind by which he is led to indulge ardent and lofty hopes*. That power which holds its prism to the eye of the youthful mind, and thus throws a gorgeous colouring over every future object, acts now with greatest intensity, and, according to the direction given to it, must necessarily play a conspicuous part amongst those causes that form the character, and contribute to the weal or the wo of man. A poet has said—

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast.”

This is not universally true. Hope springs eternal in the *regenerated* human breast. To all others it has a period, and is limited to the narrow cycles of a portion of man's present being. But it cannot have escaped the most ordinary observation, that *young* men instinctively cherish great hopes. This, perhaps, is the natural result of an immortal princi-

ple—of the germ of an existence that can only develop its appropriate powers, and enter on scenes of action and enjoyment suited to its nature in a future world. Or, it may be the result of that “disproportion between the human passions and their ordinary objects, which constitutes one of the strongest internal evidences of man’s future destination.” Whatever may be its cause, the fact itself is indisputable; the mind of the young man eagerly compasses vast objects of hope. The pleasures of hope enter largely into the sum of youthful enjoyment. On the proper direction of this capability, the happiness of the individual is, to a great extent, dependent.

Let this passion of high and unbounded hope be stimulated by the objects which avarice, or ambition, or the love of fame, presents, and what will be the influence exerted by it on the character and happiness of the young man? It is a well known law of mind, that we become assimilated to the objects with which we are conversant. The truth of this is demonstrated in the power of certain localities and natural scenery to modify and give character to a people. And this law of assimilation acts with the greatest vigour and intensity on youth. Now, the objects embraced by hope, have precisely the same influence over the minds of the young, as though they were present realities. If, then, this elastic power expands and grasps those exciting and gorgeous objects beheld from that summit on which Satan places the young mind, when he shows it the kingdoms of this world and all their glory, the disastrous influence of hope is incalculable. In such a

case it becomes the great lure to destruction. It beckons the ardent young man onward, and dazzles and blinds him in the chase, till his feet stumble on those dark mountains that bound the territory of irrevocable ruin! And when such hopes are disappointed, as in most instances they must be, what an influence on character and happiness is thus exerted. What gloom and despondency, what rebellion against the allotments of Providence, what mad misanthropy, what desperation and suicide, have followed the thwarting of unsanctified hopes! And yet, by a permanent susceptibility of his nature, man must indulge hope, and the *young* man, fond, *enthusiastic hope*. This peculiarity, then, in the constitution of the young mind, cannot, with safety, be given over to the control of accident, or left without a competent guide. But where shall such a guide be found? Who knows what is in man, or what awaits him in the veiled and impenetrable scenes of futurity? Who can present to him *legitimate* objects of hope sufficiently great and commanding, to fill the capacities of the soul—objects that shall be permanent and immutable amidst the perpetual fluctuations of all terrestrial things? None but God. In his revelation to man, He has made a munificent provision for this want of our spiritual nature. The Bible presents all those objects that can come legitimately within the range of the mortal and immortal hopes of the young mind. On its imperishable page is recorded “*the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*” Is it natural for the young man to hope for excellence of character and honourable distinction in this

world? The Bible presents to him the most illustrious examples of moral worth, the highest style of character, and the noblest deeds of a divine heroism, and tells him that the same exhaustless grace of God, which recovered and adorned our common nature in the persons of those whom He sanctions as the true "Heroes of History," is now freely proffered to him. The Bible tells him that "the honour which cometh from above," and which has shed an unfading lustre on the character and lives of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, on earth, and crowned them with immortal glory in heaven, is now legitimately within his reach. What an honour!—the honour of having all the noble faculties of his soul recovered from the degradation of the fall, adorned with the highest endowments of our moral nature, and consecrated to the exalted service of his Redeemer, and to the promotion of the best interests of his fellow-men—the honour of being a son and heir of God, a joint heir with Jesus Christ—the honour of being the object of the benevolent ministry of angels, and of being allied to all the great and the good of Jehovah's dominions! But this excursive capability of hope in the young mind is not wholly satisfied with any thing within the range of earth or the limits of time. Its unwearied wing soon beats against the boundaries of the one, and arrives at the close of the other, and takes an upward and forward aim over an illimitable and eternal future.

Now, how admirably adapted are the disclosures of the Bible to this faculty of unbounded hope in

the young man. It brings "life and immortality to light." It gives the certainty of rational evidence to the truth of man's eternal existence. It presents to the ardent hopes of the young a boundless scene of pure and peaceful being beyond the utmost verge of this life's horizon, and undimmed by the shadow of death—a scene of triumphal and eternal rejoicing in redeeming grace and dying love, where human nature, purified and exalted, shall see the Son of God as he is, and be like him, a partner of his mediatorial throne in heaven! The Bible informs him that for the holy is held in certain reservation there an *inheritance* incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away—a crown of righteousness—a throne of glory—an uninterrupted and transforming vision of Jehovah's face—an everlasting communion and fellowship with all the pure, congenial spirits of the universe—a sphere of action and enjoyment, in which the soul shall expand, and rise, and shine through the progressions of eternity! This is "the hope set before" the young man by the gospel. It is just such a hope as may be safely permitted to engross and control the capabilities of the young mind. It embraces all those objects adapted to exalt and ennoble human nature. "Whoso hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." It is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;" thus binding the young mind to all that is stable, in the future and eternal realities of heaven, coupling it with all that is powerful and prevalent in the intercessions of the great "Forerunner" and "High Priest" within that veil, and ena-

bling it to outride the storms of earth, and to survive "the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds."

In view of these influences exerted by the Bible on young men, what philanthropist can withhold the best wishes of his heart and the noblest labours of his hand from this great national society represented here to-day, whose object is to multiply and diffuse copies of the holy scriptures, till they shall come in contact with the minds of all the youth of our country? The relation of this society to the young men of our republic, and the influence it is destined ultimately to exert on their minds, foreshadow results of stupendous and incalculable interest. The homage paid to the Bible by the talent, intelligence, and rank now enlisted in this and kindred associations in other countries, and the untiring zeal and noble devotion of some of the greatest minds in diffusing the light of revealed truth, have branded with infamy the sentiment once so popular with young men, that it is the mark of *distinguished intellect to neglect* and affect to *despise the sacred oracles*. Time was when such affectation was regarded as the index of an enviable elevation above the vulgar, and as the proof of that liberalizing philosophical discrimination which distinguishes between the original principles of our nature, and the prejudices and superstitions which accident or education may have superinduced upon them. But that time has passed away. The Bible has commanded the reverence and admiration of too many gifted and mighty minds—it has laid under contribution for its spread through the world too high a style of beneficent action and too exalted

qualities of moral character, and at this moment is exerting on large portions of civilized and educated man, too deep and controlling an influence, to permit mere cavilling and contemptuous skepticism to pass currently any longer *as a mark of genius!* The very existence of this society demonstrates to our young men that the holy volume has come forth unharmed and in renovated splendour from the deadly attacks of the French and English infidelity of a past age, and the German neology of the present; and, in its own beautiful language respecting the sun, "is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race;" and soon it will be true also of this sacred volume: its "going forth is from the end of the heaven, and its circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." The futility and madness of opposition to the vital word is now most obvious. The holy oracles, by the inherent energy of eternal truth, have broken away for ever from the angry grasp of an infidel world, and are now destined to "run and have free course, and be glorified," till that splendid consummation when the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord! This being the case, the labours of the American Bible Society to supply the nation, and to keep it supplied with the scriptures, will soon exhibit a phenomenon which the world, to any considerable extent, has never yet witnessed; namely, the standard of mental and moral character to which the Bible can elevate and conform young men. When it comes into the possession and is perused by the great majority of the youth now urging

closely on the steps of those who tread the various walks of mature life, what a different generation will they be from those that have preceded them! What a refinement and elevation of the domestic and social affections will they exhibit, when imbued with the spirit of those delicate and exquisitely tender *home* scenes which the Bible presents with so touching a simplicity in its early history of our race! What an estimate will they form of the real dignity of human nature, and of what constitutes the noblest attributes of man, as they contemplate those worthies whom the scriptures present as the true models of the CHRISTIAN *heroic* character—worthies who still exist, though parted from earth, and will live on and act a distinguished part in the great drama of intelligent being in a future and endless economy! What a surprising effect will be produced on their taste and imagination when the minds of young men are familiar and filled with the splendid *imagery* of the Bible! From this source even Byron himself, with all his moody skepticism, borrowed a redeeming radiance that shone in strange contrast with the gloomy conceptions of his own mighty but perverted genius. What serenity, what elevation, what expansion of mind, and what thrilling emotions of heart will characterize the young man deeply imbued with the conception of those forms of calm, immortal beauty, those scenes of profound repose, and those objects of natural and moral sublimity which pervade the poetry of inspiration! Nor can we estimate the effect that may yet be produced on the minds of young men by the contemplation of those scenes of intense interest and over-

matching grandeur which the prophecy of the Bible declares are yet to be enacted in our world. Who may adequately conceive of the rich and glowing adornment of the young mind in every virtue that exalts and gives lasting worth to man, when it has learned to breathe in and appreciate the celestial purity of the doctrines and precepts of God's book?

If, by a divine blessing, the labours of this society shall be successful in bringing the majority of young men in our country under these influences of the Bible, how amazing will be the result on the literature, the politics, the social institutions, and the morals of this nation! The heaven-descended dove will then be more prominent than the American eagle; peace and purity, integrity and truth will supersede the strife and crime, the intrigue and falsehood which have stained the recent pages of our history; talent and learning will then bow to the cross, and genius again present its richest gems as an offering to that pure and vital Christianity personated and acted out by the young men of this great and free republic, whilst "the dew of their youth" is still fresh and sparkling upon them.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE A DORCAS SOCIETY OF YOUNG
LADIES BELONGING TO THE AUTHOR'S
PASTORAL CHARGE.*



THE elevated enjoyments of intellect constitute the most marked difference between man and the inferior tribes of animals. The gratifications of the latter are limited exclusively to the narrow sphere of the senses. The highest order of irrational creatures never partake of the pleasures of *thought*. It is the province and the privilege of man only (in our world,) to break over the enclosures of sense, and away from present objects, and to wander in pleasing memory over the past, or bound onward in imagination and hope, through an indefinite future peopled with forms of ideal beauty and loveliness, that subdue and captivate the heart. God has so constructed the mechanism of the human mind, that its own movements prove a source of happiness. In the very capability and exercise of thinking, the mind is conscious of an enjoyment immeasurably

* The author prefers the method, here adopted, of publishing the address with all the marks of familiarity of style, and of his pastoral relation to the hearers, rather than that of giving it a more abstract and essay-like form, which might, indeed, add somewhat to its merit, in point of diction, but which would deprive it of that interest, which attaches to an address that bears the evidence of having been *actually* spoken to *real* living human beings.

superior to that derived from impressions on the senses, and of a kind that can only belong to an intellectual being. To us, perhaps, the most interesting view that can be taken of the human mind, is to contemplate it as an *instrument of happiness*. A critical analysis of all its powers, susceptibilities, and tendencies, physical and moral, and of the ulterior issues to which they were originally designed to lead, will prove that the mind was constructed as an instrument of happiness, just as much as the harp or the organ was made to "discourse sweet music." The adaptations in the one case are as clear and recognizable as in the other. No one can be acquainted with its capacities, and can have noticed the boundless resources of thought and emotion furnished by the wide universe, without perceiving the relation which the mind, as an instrument, bears to the highest happiness of man. It is not only the subject of those passive impressions of pleasure, made on it by the beauty and sublimity of nature, in which the hand of God strikes its chords and elicits sweet notes in the soul as the breeze on the *Æolian harp*, but itself *originates* thought, and takes its *voluntary* excursions through intellectual realms, where it *creates* the noble scenery it contemplates, and finds bliss in the employment of its own wonderful capacities. It would be trite, indeed, to remark, that in order to enjoy the mental happiness for which the Creator destined us, the mind must be *cultivated*. If the greater part of our intellectual joys be not passive but active—if they depend on the voluntary exercise of our powers, and the direction which we give to our trains

of thought, then, obviously, our happiness of this kind is suspended on the care and assiduity with which we cultivate our minds. The mind, though in one aspect an instrument, differs from all others in this, that it has a *self-moving power*—it *tunes* itself, and has a *voluntary* control over its own operations. The bearing then of mental cultivation on our happiness is too obvious to require illustration. The great and *characteristic* intellectual difference between the lowest classes of society, whose range of thought and of mental enjoyment is but little wider than that of the inferior animals, and the higher and liberally educated is, that the latter can withdraw their attention from the objects of sense, and direct it, at pleasure, to those intellectual combinations which delight the imagination. If, then, mental cultivation have an important bearing on the happiness of mankind generally, it has a special bearing, for reasons hereafter to be given, on the happiness of the gentler sex. Permit me, then, on this occasion, to suggest to you a few thoughts on the influence of intellectual cultivation on *female* happiness. The phrase, “intellectual cultivation,” is liable to be understood by some in too restricted a sense. I therefore premise that I do not mean by it merely that young ladies shall have gone through the ordinary course of female education. It is possible to master every branch embraced in the most thorough system of the schools, and yet the power of original and independent thinking may never have been called into action. Many a youth who has no mean opinion of his own genius, carries away his parchment testimonials from

the best college or university of the land duly signed and sealed, aye, and goes delightfully burdened with academic honours too, who is most profoundly ignorant of *the art of thinking*, and an utter stranger to the lofty enjoyment thence resulting. So, many a young lady completes an extensive and accomplished education without ever having had one distinct original train of thought during the whole course, or ever having learned that she possesses an inherent capability of originating and prosecuting intellectual speculations peculiarly *her own*. This capability is entirely distinct from that almost mechanical operation of the memory and of the understanding, which is all that is necessary to acquire what is often termed a good education. It is possible to store the memory with all the facts, and to exercise the understanding so as to comprehend all the principles of the various branches of learning, and yet the power of thinking *for one's self* never be developed. So it is possible, after an education is said to be "finished," to pursue an extended course of reading, and acquire treasures of valuable information, whilst the capability of originating and prosecuting *independent* trains of thought lies utterly dormant.

What is meant then by intellectual cultivation, is such a development and discipline of all the mental capacities as will enable the mind, apart from all external appliances, to elaborate those forms of thought or combination of ideas which will bear upon them its own image and superscription. This necessarily includes a knowledge of the laws of mind itself. It were preposterous to suppose that

any one *could* use an instrument to advantage while ignorant of its nature. The study of intellectual philosophy, not as a matter of mere memory, but as a science to be verified by a reference to her own experience, and by a careful analysis of her own mental states, is indispensable to the proper cultivation of any lady's mind. This is the science which pre-eminently teaches the art of thinking, by ascertaining the faculties of the mind, and pointing out the laws that produce or control its various phenomena. Proper culture of mind will include also the development and exercise of the power of *generalization*. By this is meant that power by which the mind passes from the consideration of isolated, particular objects, (which would greatly limit the range of thought and of knowledge,) to the contemplation of vast and extended classes or orders that have some relation of resemblance common to all the individuals of which they are composed. This is the faculty on which all our processes of reasoning depend; and need I say that that does not deserve the name of intellectual cultivation which does not include the capability of extended, close, consecutive reasoning. In the mental training of ladies, the evolution, discipline, and right direction of the *imagination* is an object of primary moment. No class suffer so deeply the effects of a lawless or ill-regulated action of this faculty, and no class are susceptible of a purer or more elevated pleasure from its legitimate exercise than ladies. I do not mean by imagination merely the capability of passively enjoying the exquisite productions of genius in the imitative and liberal arts—nor of appreciating only

the splendid imagery and magnificent creations of the poet, but of forming for one's self those rare combinations of thought which are to the mind's eye what the evershifting beauties of the kaleidoscope are to the bodily, and which throw their rainbow colourings on the darkest clouds that the realities of life ever roll over our pathway. In addition to this, proper mental culture includes also a power of contemplating things, not in those common, obvious aspects in which they appear to undisciplined minds, but in those more remote, extended, and recondite relations which classify and connect them with other and distant objects, which are never visible to the vulgar eye. Allied to this, and equally included, is the capability of mind to pursue its own far-reaching speculations; not learned from books, nor aided by conversation, but under the promptings of its native and disciplined energies—a capability of taking its towering flight, and, with tireless and excursive wing, wandering over those distant and pathless regions of thought hitherto unmarked by the foot-prints of any other intellectual adventurer.

My fair hearers, by this time, are doubtless discouraged by the elevation and perfection of the standard I have now presented. I can only reply, its measure *may* be attained by the majority of educated females, *if* they will only devote as much time to solid intellectual acquisition as they squander uselessly at their toilet, or worse than uselessly, in frivolous company, or in the infatuation of novel-reading. The standard needs be no higher, and it ought not to be lower than to demand such a de-

velopment, discipline, and control of all the mental faculties as shall enable *woman* to perform the duties and attain the noble destinies of an intellectual, *thinking* being, created originally in the image of God. That this will contribute to the happiness of either sex is obvious, because, by thus cultivating the mind, we act in accordance with the laws by which God designed it to be governed, and fulfil one of the great purposes of our creation. As has been intimated, the Deity designed to make the exercise of thought itself a source of happiness to the mind. Next to the pure and peaceful joys of piety are the pleasures of a well-trained intellect. They are not only incomparably above those of sense, but are mainly independent of external circumstances. They become so incorporated with, and a part of, the mind itself, as to be unaffected by those perpetual changes that are passing on all inferior objects of enjoyment. What lady would not aspire to have the lot of her inheritance cast in this "hill country" of intellectual joy?—this middle region of the atmosphere, far above the mists and murky vapour of mere animal enjoyment, and but a little below those bright altitudes of thought and emotion occupied by pure and lofty intelligences!

It is a grateful task for me to point out to you the influence which intellectual cultivation will exert on your happiness *in society*. The sweet sympathies that bind the heart of man to his fellow man as a *social* being, and especially those exquisitely tender ties that connect with us the fairer half of creation, furnish a source of enjoyment, by the interchange of thought, and the reciprocity of senti-

ment and emotion to which they lead, that can only be appreciated by a *cultivated* mind. *Woman* was designed to reap the richer portion of this golden harvest of social joys. She was pre-eminently intended and fitted to shine in the circle of friendship, where "heart meets heart reciprocally warm," and to partake largely of the "feast of reason and the flow of soul." Some of the happiest hours in the early life of Miss Hannah More were those spent in the social circle with Johnson, Burk, and their literary cotemporaries, who constituted, at the time, the stars of Great Britain. Amidst that galaxy of gifted minds she shone fair as the moon in peerless beauty.

It was intellectual cultivation alone that rendered her susceptible of the high enjoyment she derived from this source, and which made her at one time *the idol* of the literary circles of London. It is this alone, my fair hearers, which will enable you to command those elevated and ennobling topics of conversation, and that ready and graceful utterance of your thoughts, that will impart to you a conscious dignity and ease during your social intercourse, and furnish material for delightful reflection afterwards. How grovelling and pitiful is that meagre gratification which results from the *small talk*, the gossip, and, too often, the back-biting and slander that characterize the interviews of those deemed *ladies!* Wherever these prevail, they may be regarded as the infallible indication of a want of mental culture. They are the rags of intellectual poverty, and like the self-righteousness of the sinner, they are (pardon the homely, though inspired saying,) "*filthy rags.*"

Amidst what is often termed an array of fashion and beauty, the thoughtful mind will find itself absorbed and abstracted in melancholy reflections, on the loss of social happiness sustained by ladies through the lack of that mental elevation and culture which would enable them to introduce such topics, and interchange such thoughts, as would, according to the laws of mind, promote the enjoyment of a *rational, thinking* creature. It is impossible, our intellectual constitution remaining *what it is*, that the ordinary tea-party "chit-chat" of ladies, should minister any solid or lasting pleasure to the immortal mind. No; to realize the purest and highest joys of your social nature, you must possess a degree of intellectual cultivation which will enable you to leave the frivolous truisms and hackneyed topics of the day, and to select those fresh and original subjects of conversation which are the result of your own habits of close and discriminating thought, which constitute the intellectual wealth that you have been toiling for, and have acquired in your hours of retirement and application. It is this which will attract to you the real intelligence of the company, and give you command over the springs of other minds, and a participation in their delight and surprise, that you have so successfully awakened and directed their powers of thought. And while you have thus the conscious pleasure of enriching them, you may also have the additional gratification of finding returned to you with interest, what you have imparted to them, by the new collateral trains of thought which those minds will be enabled to pursue in consequence of the capital which you have furnished them. The

impulsive power thus exerted on others by your conversation, may carry them beyond the limits of your speculations on a particular subject, and cause them in turn to impart a delightful intellectual stimulus to you. But there is another way in which mental culture will greatly contribute to your happiness in society, viz.: by the just observations it will enable you to make. The action of a well developed and disciplined mind on the phenomena of social life, cannot fail of being a source of solid enjoyment. But what improvement or pleasure can result from the kind of observations which some ladies make on society? And what must be the only class of observations that can be made by all ladies who have neglected the faculty of thinking and reasoning? Why, to notice critically all the dresses of their own sex, and to comment thereon, especially to decry the costume of a rival beauty as not at all pretty nor in good taste, to test the quality of *lace*, and, if possible, the genuineness of diamond rings and jewelry, to notice the grace with which a gentleman enters the room, whether his locks and whiskers are exactly *the genteel* cut, whether he has a beautiful hand and a small *cultivated* foot, and whether he has the right inclination of body, the line of grace in the position of the neck and head, when he pays his adoration to the fair ones. Though this may approach to caricature, yet there is too much of truth in it when applied to the observations made on society by some ladies of whom we might expect better things. How much such observations can enrich, ennoble, and bless an intelligent rational nature, I leave my gentle hearers to

determine. Besides the charm which it gives to conversation, intellectual cultivation will enable you to enjoy a refined mental pleasure in those silent processes of thought involved in the habits of observation on society to which it will give rise. In those intervals which necessarily occur in conversation, a highly cultivated mind will look with the eye of a philosopher on the developments of man's social nature then being made. Such a mind will not regard the phenomena thus exhibited as casual, isolated things, furnishing no materials for profitable reflection, and resolvable into no great principles. It will analyze, classify, and refer them to some general laws of our social being. Thus will it enlarge its knowledge of the philosophy of one department of human nature, acquire a more correct estimate of character, strengthen its judgment of men and social affairs, and obtain the materials of subsequent profitable speculation. Such a mind will find no difficulty in estimating the exact worth of a great part of the apparent politeness and professions of friendship common amongst even the better circles. To the untutored, unreflecting individual, there is much in the forms of society adapted to deceive, much in the apparent pleasure which some would be thought to take in our company, which is gross hypocrisy. It grieves me to say it, but so common is the weakness and credulity of ladies in this respect, that it tempts the unprincipled of the other sex to play upon them by flattering attentions, for no other purpose than simply to ascertain how credulous and confiding woman is!

In society, a cultivated and reflective mind will

also learn some of its most impressive lessons of the vanity of life. Amidst the gayest scene of fashion, youth, and beauty, such a mind will scarcely fail to glance forward and anticipate the sad changes which the lapse of years and larger experience of human ills bring upon that now buoyant and joyous company. One of the most mournfully pleasing and profitable trains of thought on the short-lived joys and transitory existence of man, might have been had some twenty years ago, while promenading in Castle Garden, New York, as it then was, with a friend by your side, and surrounded by three or four thousand of the young, the gay, pleasure-loving inhabitants of that great metropolis. And when enjoying the sweets of social intercourse, while these thoughts of the fleeting nature of all earthly joys are present, how natural for the cultivated mind to indulge lofty aspirations after that immortal scene of intimate fellowship, where the social principle will have an unlimited and enduring sway, and where congenial spirits, bound by ties that can never be sundered, shall interchange thought, sentiment, and affection through an endless duration.

As a defence against ennui when alone, not less than a source of happiness in society, woman demands a high degree of mental culture. It is this pre-eminently, that will minister to your enjoyment in those hours of retirement which your sphere and station in life necessarily involve. The delicacy of your sex, and the customs of society alike forbid you to mingle in many of those busy and bustling scenes which furnish excitement and pleasure to the rougher and sterner half of our race. Domestic re-

tirement and the noiseless duties of home, are inseparable from your condition, and fill up the greater portion of your terrestrial existence. True, the mere *butterflies* of your sex so manage to be mostly on the wing, fluttering from flower to flower during the short and summer months of youth. But even they cannot escape their hours of retirement. No ingenuity can avoid certain languid intervals, and unwelcome pauses in the giddy round of their existence, when they sit with folded wings, "*ill at ease.*" All of you, however, who design to confine yourselves within the appropriate sphere of woman, and who intend, in compliance with the apostolical injunction, to "*be keepers at home,*" will find that the greater part of your lives must be spent in comparative retirement. Now, how intolerable must such retirement be to a vacant and unreflective mind?—to a mind whose only materials of thought consist in those external objects that must be present to the senses—a mind whose only aliment is the unhealthy, intoxicating stimulus ministered by the theatre, balls, parties, promenades, or the spiced and sweetened nonsense that marks the conversation of smaller circles of fashion. In retirement, such a mind, by a law of the mental economy, must feel miserable—not much less miserable than the wretched sot himself, when bereft of his cups. Hence, there are minds which, the moment that they are divorced from external excitements and obliged to be alone, feel as though they were suspended mid-air, in boundless vacancy. The only intellectual movement that they can make to avoid an uneasy and absolute fixation, is to get their feet

on the tall stilts which novel-reading furnishes, and make their hobbling strides through fairy regions, neither treading exactly earth or skies. But a mind properly trained, and richly stored with the elements of thought, will experience none of this wretchedness, and be under no necessity of betaking itself to such resorts in its seasons of retirement. To such a mind, occasional solitude is congenial, and is invested with a mysterious charm. It covets retirement, and loves at times to isolate itself from all external excitements, by voluntarily throwing itself out of, and beyond the hum and whirl of society. In a higher sense than that of the noble bard, it can emphatically exclaim—

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods—
There is a rapture on the lonely shore—
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.
I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before;
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.”

Retirement often furnishes the well disciplined mind its most delightful hours both of thought and of emotion. The very consciousness of possessing the power to carry on extended trains of solitary thinking, is, of itself, a source of pleasure. The exercise of that power, in the quiet speculations and communings of the soul separated from all external impulses, supplies an elevated enjoyment unknown to the crowds of the sensual and unthinking. And even with less of mental capacity than this supposes, how delightful might the retirement of ladies be-

come, were they early to cultivate a taste for the highest and best class of authors, and to hold intimate fellowship, by perusing their works, with such minds as those of Bacon, Newton, Locke, Butler, Howe, Hall, M'Intosh, Dugald Stewart, and Dr. Brown, or to range with keen relish through that universe of beauty and sublimity, created by the great master poets of all past ages. A discipline like this would soon enable them, on closing the volume of their favourite author, to take an untrammelled excursion by themselves, in those far off regions of original, independent thought, where the face of things has never had a feature imprinted on it by any previous visit of mind. To those capable of such intellectual employment, time would never seem to fly with drooping, tardy wing. The hours of retirement to which their station confines them, would then be hailed by ladies, as occasions of improvement and augmented mental happiness. So far from disrelishing their homes, and craving the morbid excitement of a crowd, or the change and novelty of "*morning calls*," they could then attest, in their own joyous experience, the truth and justness of Cowper's sentiment,—

" 'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat,
 To peep at such a world, to see the stir—
 Of the great Babel, and not feel the crowd;
 To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
 At a safe distance, where the dying sound,
 Falls in soft murmur on the uninjured ear.—
 Thus sitting, and surveying, thus at ease,
 The globe and its concerns, I seem advanced
 To some secure and more than mortal height,
 That liberates and exempts me from them all."

To the minds of ladies thus employed, there is a

sense of noble elevation which gives a dignity and charm to their seasons of retirement. Such minds can never know those intervals of languor and restless vacancy,—that ennui and nervous depression which characterize the solitary hours of too many of our fashionable ladies. And this may justify me in a digressive and passing remark, on the influence of intellectual culture on female *health* and *temper*. So mysterious is the union between mind and body, and so intimate their sympathy and reciprocal action on each other, that the state of the intellect often affects, directly, the bodily health and animal spirits. When the mind is pleasantly and profitably occupied, the corporeal functions seem to derive, from this very circumstance, a grateful stimulus. Digestion is more perfect, and sleep more sound and refreshing. The nervous system is pervaded with a tone and vigour that are the direct results of mental employment and pleasure. This truth is practically recognised in the treatment of the hypochondriac and the nervous invalid. The great object of an intelligent physician in such cases, is to combine pleasant *mental* excitement with physical remedies. Hence, the effort to break up the melancholy monotony of the patient, by sending him or her on jaunts of pleasure, and to public places of cheerful resort. I doubt not, my fair hearers, that one great cause of the feeble health of many of your sex, is legitimately attributable to the want of intellectual excitement and activity in their hours of retirement and leisure. To them, the chariot of time “drives heavily,” and its “wheels,” like those of the one in which Pharaoh pursued Israel, “come off in the

sand." External excitement being removed, the mind pines in its own emptiness. The brain, as the organ or instrument of the mind, is thus left to intervals of inactivity, which have the same debilitating effect on it, that results to the corporeal powers or muscular system generally, by too long sleep. Depression of spirits is the necessary consequence concatenated, also, with lengthened links of nervous horrors, loss of appetite, dyspepsia, unquiet sleep, irresolution, fickleness, tormenting whims and conceits, and ultimately—unless the mind can be aroused to salutary activity—confirmed habits of ill health. The transition now to irritability of *temper*, is easy, and almost inevitable. A mind thus dissatisfied with itself, preying upon the unfortunate body with which it is united, and in turn, preyed upon by the irritated and abused body—such a mind is in great danger of welcoming even a fit of anger, if it only promises to rouse it from its lethargy, and to rescue it from the vague wretchedness of its own inactivity. The petulance of single ladies who have out-lived the external excitement of youthful society, and been consigned to the permanent retirement of a certain indefinite age, is almost wholly attributable to the want of that intellectual cultivation, which furnishes the mind in solitude with ample sources of interesting and felicitous thought. Maiden ladies are not bound by fate or physical necessity, to be notoriously irritable in their temper. One of the most buoyant, cheerful, humorous, happy, good-natured individuals with whom I have ever been acquainted, is a lady who has *literally* lived in single *blessedness*, till she is now quite beyond that age

which legally exempts gentlemen from military duty. But in youth, she disciplined her mind to live on its own resources. She early learned the art of thinking, and acquired a keen relish for those intellectual joys that fade not with the hues of the cheek, and that wither not with the wasted form and altered gait of age.* But while this proves satisfactorily, the power of intellectual cultivation on the happiness of single ladies, and how far it succeeds in compensating for the deprivation of all those enjoyments resulting from wedded life, and domestic relations and endearments,—yet “it is not good” that *woman*, any more than “man, should be alone;” nor is it the general law of the divine economy that she should be. I therefore remark, that mental culture will tell directly and powerfully on your happiness, *by the disposition which it will lead you to make of your affections*, or, in other words, *by the influence it will have on your choice of a partner for life*. My fair hearers, spare your smile at the introduction of this topic. It is a subject involving the totality of your domestic happiness. God designed that one principal source of your earthly enjoyment, should consist in the exercise of those delicate and deep affections

* Since this lecture was delivered, the author has had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with a single lady, quite advanced in years, who has *more* than the mental activity, and all the sunny cheerfulness of *eighteen*, and who, in her susceptibility of warm and noble friendship—in the fresh and vigorous play of the benevolent affections—in her mental discipline, and intellectual treasures, and in the charm of her conversation, and her power of entertaining agreeably an *educated* guest, is one of the most interesting individuals, male or female, with whom he has ever met in the course of his life.

with which he has so signally endowed your sex. Truth, as well as poetry, dictated the declaration, that "*woman was made to love.*" If her affections be misplaced or blighted, by the very constitution of her nature the world becomes a blank to her, and in vain offers her its richest treasures as a compensation for her loss. Man, when disappointed, can betake himself to the pursuit of military glory, political distinction, literary fame, or even the mad enterprises of avarice and ambition, and in the din of his tumultuous career can drown the mournful voice that speaks of his blighted heart, and echoes from its desolation. But *woman's* affections, are her earthly *all*. Ruin in these, is to *her* an *irreparable* ruin. Under unrequited love, the following exquisitely tender and touching lines of the poet, constitute a literal and faithful description of her emotions:—

"I seem alone, mid universal death,
Lone as a single sail upon the sea,—
Lone as a wounded swan, that leaves the flock,
To heal in secret, or to bleed and die."

But has woman, by a strange fatality, no protection, no defence against these unfortunate entanglements of feeling, and those permanently misplaced affections which imbitter life, and consign so many of the sex to a premature grave? Who will venture to assert, that a righteous Providence abandons the most helpless of His offspring to a destiny like this? No, a benevolent God has placed within the reach of woman the invaluable safeguard of a well trained intellect. Proper mental culture will not only strengthen her judgment and powers of discrimina-

tion, and give them their appropriate place and weight, but will also teach her to discard and despise, as equally absurd and mischievous, all those theories of love found in novels and works of romance, which represent us, as *wholly involuntary* in the exercise of the affections—which represent the mind or heart, as a perfectly passive subject, of sudden and random impulses, in a case involving our dearest earthly joys—theories which support the dangerous doctrine of a magical and irresistible stroke, smiting through the very heart at the first sight of a person, before a solitary mental or moral quality of the individual is known to us! Now a lady who has cultivated any acquaintance with intellectual philosophy, must know that rational and *virtuous* love in such a case, is a physical impossibility. Our affections are governed by fixed and definite laws, one of which is, that the discovery of real or supposed excellence in an individual is absolutely necessary to elicit our love for him. It is admitted, that we may be struck with the personal beauty of one, and have an emotion of taste, just like that experienced when beholding a finished and elegant statue, or an exquisitely fine production of the pencil. But this has no necessary connexion with the exercise of our permanent and engrossing affections. And yet, how many yield themselves up to this doctrine of downright FATALISM in love. I knew a somewhat romantic young gentleman, who was exceedingly struck at first sight, with the transcendent beauty of features and of form, in a young lady, and began to feel, and say to himself, “This, perhaps, is *the destined one*,—the circumstances

that have thrown us together, are certainly peculiar—this is to be the mysterious, magic moment that is to give complexion to all my remaining days.” But after having conversed with her awhile on the subject of the weather, the character of the roads, (there were no railroads then,) and kindred topics, one of those awkward pauses ensued, which, as she was entertaining the gentleman in her own house, it became desirable should be speedily broken up. Accordingly, drawing her ruby lips in the curves of a smile that would have graced the face of a goddess, and displaying a set of teeth that would compete with those which Solomon describes of his spouse, and throwing lines of witchery round her eyes that might have enchanted the veriest stoic, she gave the note of preparation for utterance, and with an ineffably silly intonation of voice, asked the question—“*Maryland is a right pretty LITTLE PLACE, is it not?*” The young gentleman, though of a highly romantic and poetic temperament, did not feel that he was bound by an irresistible fate to yield to his first impression, and fall hopelessly in love with this splendid specimen of *beautiful INANITY!* Intellectual cultivation will free you, ladies, from the absurd doctrine, that you *must* be the unresisting victim of this mysterious *smiting*, at first sight. Besides, it will form your taste for the society of that class of gentlemen, who are not only capable of being your companions, but of stimulating you, and directing your efforts in making still larger mental acquisitions. Suitable discipline of mind will free you from the danger and the folly of falling in love with a handsome face, a graceful person,

polished manners, and stereotyped flattery in the absence of all the higher and nobler qualities of mind and heart, that form the only true basis of a rational and lasting attachment. It will teach you also, before it is too late, the fatal mistake of permitting *wealth* to have a preponderating influence in the selection of a partner. Many a warm, generous, youthful heart, has been bound to the frigid dulness and stupidity of age, literally, by a *golden link*. This has always seemed to me, the most revolting spectacle in the social condition of human nature. To talk of happiness, in such a case, is mockery and madness,—

“ 'Tis beauty lingering round decay,—
The farewell beam of feeling past away,”

as far as the lady is concerned. And it is doubtful, whether such a union can add to the domestic comforts of the unfortunate old husband himself. His efforts to appear young, and his awkward attempts to adapt his manners, and adjust his spirits to those of his wife—his uneasy conviction of her restlessness at being shut up to his society alone—his endeavours to sober down her troublesome and untameable buoyancy, to the point beyond which he can no longer raise his own, and the insufferable corrosions of jealousy which he experiences, when she is thrown into the society of gentlemen of her own age, often cause him to curse bitterly the gilded bait by which he caught this wayward, sportive water nymph, who is now constantly swimming, diving, and dashing away from his tremulous grasp, in the full and rapid current of youth. Intellectual cultivation only, can furnish

ladies the data by which to form a just and enlightened estimate of what constitutes the great and permanent element of happiness in the endeared relations of wedded life. It would bring them under a settled and practical conviction, that *it is mind only that can make mind happy*. It is man's knowledge of the laws and agencies of matter that enables him to conform to those laws, and employ those agencies as the means of his physical enjoyment. So it is his acquaintance with the laws and agencies of mind—with the true philosophy of the heart in all its social phenomena, which enables him to conform to these laws, and adapt himself to this philosophy, and to control these phenomena, so as to promote and secure mutual domestic happiness. I do not affirm, that an intelligent man may not render a wife unhappy—because there is such a thing as *perverted* intelligence—but I do fearlessly aver, that a *brainless* beauty, as rich as Cræsus, as perfect in form as Apollo, as polished and genteel in his manners as a Chesterfield, who can dance, and bow, and ogle, and court with infinite tact, and up to the very beau ideal of those ladies themselves who live upon show, can never confer true and lasting happiness on a wife, unless she be as *brainless* as himself. And why intelligent ladies will sometimes wed those meagre specimens of male humanity, who have just “enough of soul to save the expense of salt” in their physical preservation,—just enough of mind super-added to their animal mechanism, to enable them to perform a parrot-like imitation of men,—is one of the most profound mysteries in the natural history of women. Such ladies can never

experience the higher and nobler joys of married life. It is *mind* ONLY, that can confer these;—mind, whose fruitful powers of invention and felicitous combinations of thought, are ever breaking in upon the monotonous realities of existence, and displacing them for a season by those magic creations of its own, in which imagination wanders with a renovated surprise and delight at each successive step. It is mind alone, that can know and control those great and permanent causes which operate to promote and secure the wedded bliss of rational thinking creatures. And, if there be any case in which a disparity in age does not impair domestic happiness, it is where the husband, despite the lapse of years, still retains the fresh green of youth in *mind*, and has managed to prolong the pleasures of taste and imagination beyond the bright and palmy days of academic scenes and the period of early life. In this case, the eye of youthful affection may be blind to the wrinkles which time has written on her husband's brow, and to the silver threads it has woven in his once raven locks; because, like the parent eagle, he is still able to take her on the wings of his lofty and yet vigorous intellect, and soar away towards the sun—because her heart, in its noblest youthful sensibilities, is charmed and delighted with the productions of his genius, fresh as they were in early days, and richer than then, in the results of a riper experience, and more enlarged observation. While all the intellectual qualities that command esteem and admiration remain undecayed, the warmth of the heart and its susceptibility of ardent and enthusiastic attachment, will not be impaired by

the wear of time on "the outer man." Nay, minds that are prone to philosophic melancholy, and that have formed habits of profound and mournful speculation on the mysteries and paradoxes of our present being, enjoy with great zest, the love bestowed on them, as years pass away, and test the permanency of all terrestrial attachments. When you wed then, young ladies, be sure that your partner possess imperishable qualities of *mind*, adapted to enlist and retain your affections. It is in these alone, that the permanent source of domestic happiness is to be found. The affections which rest on personal beauty and accomplishments, or on a kind of *physical* politeness and amiability, in which certain animals can vie with modern beaux, must, by the lapse of time, and the cross incidents of life, be robbed of their object, and left to wither at the very period when their growth and vigour are most important to female happiness. The present is, at best, a troubled existence. And if to woman, who has shared most largely in the temporal consequences of the apostacy, there be any compensation for its numerous social ills, it is in those refined, exalted, and ennobling intellectual joys, which the talents of an intelligent husband can create, and diffuse, repeat, and perpetuate in the domestic circle till the latest period of life. Genius can shed its own light on the deepest darkness of its earthly home, and its beams refracted by the very tear-drops of domestic sorrow, form a bow on the evening cloud of to-day, promising brighter hours to-morrow.

But, married or single, should your lives be

spared, you will arrive at a period when the frivolous enjoyments of youth can no longer please. Who may compute the influence of intellectual culture and acquisition on your happiness, in this sober, not to say sombre, season which inevitably awaits you? Could you check the wheels of time, and prolong at will the gladsome and sunny days of youth, this might present some semblance of apology for neglecting the cultivation of your minds. But protracted and full of promise as the season of youth may seem to be, yet those of us who have outlived its enchanted hours, know that when past, they appear as the bright incidents of a pleasant dream, and leave us to spend a long and wakeful period, which, if we are to be happy, other employments and other joys must fill. The vivid and pleasing impressions which external objects make on the youthful senses, must ultimately lose the charm of their novelty by mere repetition. The air-built castles of the young imagination must be shaken and overthrown in ruins, by the inevitable occurrences of real and maturer life. Many of the heart's wild and capricious attachments will be blasted by betrayal, or by cold neglect. The light, unanxious spirit of youth cannot always last. Its buoyancy, though now irrepressible, cannot permanently sustain itself at the same pitch of elevation, for on it, sooner or later, must press the weight of unavoidable cares. The taste for the gay and giddy pleasures of youth must become cloyed, satiated, and eventually worn out. Your personal charms, that now make you the admiration and the idols of the other sex, and procure for you innumerable flat-

tering attentions, must fade. The rose will wither on your cheeks, for its allotted period of bloom is only during the brief spring of youth. Time, that remorseless, unscrupulous thief, will steal away from you one by one your every beauty of face and of form, and leave instead his own unsightly foot-prints on your features, and his frosts on your heads. Borne along on a returnless current, you will, before you are aware, find yourselves quite beyond the sphere of youth's attractions, and far removed from all its peculiar pleasures. To me no spectacle is more melancholy than that of a lady who has sung, with too much truth, "*I'll be a butterfly,*" who has depended mainly on the charms of her person for the interest she has created, and the return of pleasure she has received in society, who has revelled on the spontaneous and fortuitous sweets of youth, with a recklessness and prodigality that never looked beyond the present hour, who has neither the taste nor the capability of deriving aliment from any thing but the ambrosia which filled the sparkling cup of youth, what spectacle under the vast expanse of heaven more mournful than *such* a lady, advanced to that period when time has taken away these her gods in which she trusted, and she despairingly exclaims, "*What have I more!*" Her resort to rouge and cosmetics, and all the various appliances necessary to make her appear young again, her forced and ill-befitting levity, her fruitless efforts still to attract admiration, her aping the easy volatility of a miss in her teens, and her awkward, laborious, and unsuccessful endeavours to keep herself still revolving in the orbit of youthful plea-

tures, from which the centrifugal force of age is constantly forcing her out, is a sufficiently sorrowful view of the doings of an immortal mind to render itself happy in the decline of life!

For such a lady, married or single, no source of rational or solid enjoyment remains, when once brought, as she will be, by the sure and steady lapse of time, into the circumstances to which I have just alluded. Hannah More, with the penetration of a profound philosopher, has intimated that "*how to grow old GRACEFULLY*" is one of the difficult problems for woman practically to solve. I may add, too, that this distinguished lady herself, in the closing years of her long life, gave a most satisfactory and sublime solution of this problem. Aside from the joys of religion, females have no elements of happiness in the later periods of their lives, except those which intellectual cultivation supplies. With well-trained, well-disciplined minds, though living in the single state, they need not and will not be unhappy towards the close of their mortal career. They will have been taught in time that "the chief end of woman" is not to study and practise the frivolous arts of winning the temporary admiration of gay and thoughtless gentlemen, nor to depend on the excitements of youthful society for the solid and rational enjoyment after which an intelligent nature cannot but aspire.

They will have learned, also, to estimate aright their own powers and capacities of happiness, and to regard the mere pleasures of sense as essentially deficient in the qualities which would fit them to meet and satisfy those powers and capacities; and,

by consequence, will prize intellectual joys according to their own intrinsic and enduring value. Hence they will aim to discipline all their mental faculties, and to add to their treasures of mind, through their whole lives. This will free them from that morbid and unsatisfied desire after the transitory enjoyments of youth, which imbitters the later years of an unfurnished and undisciplined female mind. They will have formed habits of intellectual activity which declining bodily vigour cannot impair. They will have cultivated and confirmed a taste for a class of joys over which time can bring no blight, and outward change no destruction. In the summer and hey-day of life they will have laid up ample stores of enjoyment for its winter evening.

Contemplate for a moment a lady who has made the cultivation of her mind (as it *ought* to be) the main object of her life. She is familiar with, and capable of relishing, the classic beauties of all the best authors. She has treasured in her memory all those prominent facts of history which illustrate great principles, and give a clue to the philosophy of society in its march of civilization and political improvement. She has had, as a subject of study and reflection, the predominating traits in the character of all the distinguished actors in the lengthened drama of time. She is familiar with the noblest examples and models of excellence in her own sex that the annals of the world present. With the practised eye of a philosopher she looks on national character, and on the social and political developments and progress of the race. She has a general

knowledge of the whole circle of the sciences. She has followed the geologist in his examination of the structure of the earth—the physiologist, in scrutinizing the mysterious functions of animal and vegetable life—the chemist, in his beautiful analysis of the substances of nature—the natural philosopher, in his investigations of the powers of matter, and his classification of its diversified and sublime phenomena under general and fixed laws—and as, though aided by Elijah's car, she has mounted from earth to heaven with the astronomer, and gone from world to world on burning wheels, till she has completed the circuit of the universe! And, superadded to all this, she possesses the power of original, independent thinking, which enables her to avail herself of these exhaustless stores, to prosecute speculations of her own, and give a play to her intellectual activity unlimited as universal nature, and enduring as the existence of mind itself.

Now, is not the happiness of such a lady, in a great measure, independent of any periods of time or any combination of external circumstances? What though youthful days with truant speed have fled, and are irrevocably gone? What though her spirit has awoke from the dreams of youthful pleasure? What though the young heart's fondest hopes have proved delusive? What though the flush of beauty has faded from her cheek, and the crowd of admirers which it once attracted have forsaken her? What though time has insensibly transferred her to that advanced point on the pathway of life where she travels comparatively alone—where the distance causes the din of youthful mirth and pleasure to die

away upon her ear, and instead of the gorgeous hues of youth's horizon, the lengthening shadows of a setting sun stretch out before her? Still that *intellectual* world in which she has learned chiefly to live is fresh, and bright, and calm, and beautiful as in other and earlier years. Its objects are not dimmed by time nor defaced by decay. No neglect can imbitter to her *this* source of pure and satisfactory enjoyment; no disaster nor depression of fortune can rob her of these hidden treasures of the soul. The joys of the cultivated mind seem to be excepted from that great law of mutation and decay so signally impressed on all things else in this terrestrial economy. Mental culture, then, will render you happy in that period of life when the airy pleasures of youth have wholly lost their power to please.

Can you desire a more convincing and practical confirmation of this truth than that furnished by the last years of that intellectual princess whose name has already been more than once introduced into this lecture? A more sublime spectacle of the power of mental culture to bless the closing period of woman's life the world has seldom witnessed than in the case of Hannah More. We contemplate with a profound reverence this magnificent specimen of cultivated female intellect which, as it approached the terminus of its earthly course, like the sun near his setting, gave us a deeper impression of its vast dimensions, and of the richness and endless variety of its own resources of felicitous light and colouring! She had been early disappointed in the pure maiden love of her heart—the deepest and most

hallowed affection of which woman is capable. She had once been the admiration of the first minds in the metropolis of Great Britain. Her society had been courted, and she had been flattered by the nobility of the nation. In her youth she had partaken largely of the richest and most sparkling joys that the very best circles of English society could afford. And yet, after having outlived the period when these things could any longer please, being destitute of those objects of the domestic affections which interest woman till the last, and being consigned to the retirement of rural life, she still found in her own intellectual resources the means of a peaceful and happy old age. At three-score and ten she sustained herself on a mental elevation that would have made many a young head dizzy, and looked, with the mind's eye undimmed by years, over the same pleasant landscape where she had often wandered delighted in earlier days. Her intellectual pleasures seemed to derive nourishment and to flourish from the very decay that time brought on all the ordinary and short-lived joys of a coarser kind. Her mind, "like frankincense," gave out its sweetness the more freely as the process of consuming the corporeal part with which it was united went on towards completion. To see a female mind that has buffeted alone all the storms of a long and eventful life—that has risen above its accumulated clouds, and trampled their darkness beneath its feet, thus sustaining itself till the last upon its *own* resources, bright, buoyant, and happy at the closing hour, teaches us not only to prize mental culture and to reverence *woman's* intellectual nature, but points

to that august immortality which God has provided for the redeemed mind, where its range of action and enjoyment shall be co-extensive with the universe and commensurate with eternity!

Indulge me, ladies, with a desultory remark or two in conclusion. The interest which I feel in you as the young people of my pastoral charge, and the affection which I cherish towards you all, have led me to devote an hour one evening each week during the past six months for your intellectual gratification and improvement. The pleasure which these exercises have afforded me has been greatly enhanced by the hope that I may thus succeed in forming in you a taste and awakening a desire for intellectual pursuits. As I sincerely wish your happiness, I cannot but feel a deep solicitude that you should early learn to prize mental cultivation, and to identify it with the most pure and solid enjoyment of which your nature at present is susceptible. Most of you are in the morning of life. The dew of your youth is not yet exhaled by "the heat," nor your buoyancy crushed by "the burden of the day." You possess innumerable facilities for intellectual acquirements, denied to your sex in a former age. In proportion as the benefits of education become general amongst the other sex, you will be laid under the necessity of a corresponding mental advancement, to retain your position in society, and to command that respect which intelligent gentlemen can only accord to *intelligent* ladies. The world expects more from you than it did or does now from your mothers, and you ought to gird yourselves to the work of meeting its reasonable.

though enlarged demands. The social sphere which God has assigned to you an angel could not fill; and to your keeping, more than to angels, he has committed some of the earliest and the dearest interests of human nature. Intelligence is indispensable to the fulfilment of the high duties of this sphere, and to the securing the sacred interests which it involves. Let your aim be high, then; "mount as on wings of eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint" in the career of knowledge and improvement. If I have contributed aught to your happiness, or inspired you with even a moderate emulation for intellectual attainments during the past season, I shall consider myself as amply repaid for my labours. That our connexion in these exercises has strengthened the bonds of esteem and affection between us I do not doubt. In the close of your meetings for the season, and in taking my leave of you for the present, I feel the commingling of tender recollections and pleasing anticipations. I see among you those who, during the past season, have indulged the precious hope of the Christian, consecrated yourselves to God, become the lambs of my flock and the prospective jewels of my crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. To me this forms the most hallowed recollection of our associated existence. However I might rejoice in your intellectual improvement, I must rejoice more in your early piety. "Rich are the tints of that beauty and fragrant those flowers on which, in the morning of life, the Lord our God sheds down the dews of his blessing."

May He keep you, and all the members of this

society, during the interval that is to elapse before we meet again, under the shadow of His own almighty wings. And when the meetings and partings of earth are over, may we be reunited in that brighter world where the intellect, unlogged by sense and unclouded by sin, shall know even as it is known, and the heart, freed from the passions and prejudices of time, find an unlimited and eternal scope for the play of all its benevolent affections.

THE END.

